







Matthew Arnold

In Eden Arnold

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THE JUDGMENT OF BRUTUS,

A PRIZE POEM.

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD.

JULY 1, 1840.

BY

LEWIS GIDLEY, 1822-1889

EXETER COLLEGE.

[SECOND EDITION.]



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T. & G. Shrimpton,
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The Judgment of Brutus.

Εἰς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἄμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

IMPERIAL Rome, the noontide of thy power
Hath past away. Transient thy glory's hour.
Yet lingers still a melancholy gleam
O'er thy seven hills and Tiber's sacred stream,
Like the pale light, which summer's evening throws
O'er earth's hush'd breast, of calm and deep repose.
Yes, memory bids thine ancient form return,
Bids the eye glow, the thrilling bosom burn,
Sees in far twilight deeds of ages fled,
Wakes with her magic spell thy mighty dead.

There first inscribed on her bright scroll of fame,
"Avenging Brutus," is thy glorious name.
High soul was his, who foremost champion stood
Of injured chastity and guiltless blood;

Who, folly's cloud dispell'd, a hero shone,
 Hurling the Tarquin from his blood-stain'd throne.
 Proud deed, which taught posterity to feel
 The slumbering virtues of a patriot zeal.
 Proud deed, whose memory in oppression's hour
 Still lends the sword, which strikes for freedom, pow'r.

Time's stream rolls back, and on my soul is cast
 A shadowy vision of the dreamy past;
 As erst the Trojan in the realms of night,
 Dim forms unborn fast crowding on his sight,
 Saw 'neath that gloom in awful line array'd
 Before him pass each visionary shade :
 So now, methinks, before my fancy's eyes
 A dread tribunal's scenes of awe arise ;
 I see the lictor with his axe of fate,
 The judge in majesty of solemn state,
 Two culprits bound. The silent tear unbid
 Is gathering fast beneath each downcast lid,
 Nor dare they upward raise a trembling eye
 To meet that glance of awful majesty,
 That glance, 'neath which oppression's minions quail'd
 When Brutus struck, and Rome new freedom hail'd.

Deep sorrow reigns throughout the place of doom,
 Each lip is silence, and each brow is gloom ;
 Vainly each longing eye essays to trace
 One ray of mercy on the father's face ;
 Vainly each heart beats quick with breathless fear,
 For all is fixed impenetrable there.
 Hark ! from his lips the final sentence breaks,
 And new-made freemen tremble while he speaks.
 Sentence of death ! Had mercy lost her sway,
 Had pity left the beamy realms of day,
 For ever left ? The father dared to see
 The last dread issue of his stern decree :
 He saw his sons', his own, warm life-blood flow
 Beneath the scourge's lacerating blow,
 He heard their anguish'd, dying voice of fear,
 It fell unheeded on a father's ear ;
 And last he saw—did not his senses reel ?—
 The blow of thunder, and the glancing steel.
 —He left the court : oh ! whither could he go,
 That man of deep unutterable woe ?
 Woe like that island-monarch's, when his son,
 His first-born, his beloved, his only one,

Heir of his realm, had found an early grave
 Beneath the surges of the stormy wave ;
 Deep on his soul fell sudden stunning pain,
 He dropt no tear, but never smiled again.

Yet could'st thou not, proud man, for refuge turn
 To thoughts, with which high patriot bosoms burn ?
 Could'st thou not still the memory of each son
 With the proud thought of duty nobly done ?
 No—like th' accursed restless wanderer driven,
 O'er earth an outcast, desperate of heaven,
 Upon whose brow the darkening lines of sin
 Told of a seared and fallen soul within ;
 So thou didst bear a recklessness of life,
 And outward signs of deep internal strife.
 When Curtius, high in arms and youthful pride,
 Devoted patriot, for his country died,
 Proud was his fate, secure of endless fame,
 And lasting glories of an honour'd name,
 In armour clad, he spurr'd his shrinking steed—
 Such were Rome's champions in her hour of need—
 Plunged from the steep, whose height the vision pain'd,
 And with one pang his wreath of glory gain'd.

But thou—methinks, when darkness closed around
 Thy couch, no balm thy bruised spirit found ;
 Tho' still the hours, to thee they bring no rest,
 Sadness sits heavy on thine aching breast ;
 And if, perchance, a passing sun-bright dream
 Cast o'er thy soul a momentary gleam
 Of former years, thy children's merry glee,
 Their voices sweet, their guileless infancy :
 A sudden start—the doom, the fatal doom
 Falls on thy soul like chillness of the tomb,
 And from the light thou turn'st thine eyes away,
 Which loathe the mockery of garish day.

Again his country called—and Brutus came
 Unbow'd, unchang'd, in spirit still the same ;
 Bravest and foremost in that well-fought field,
 That final strife, which Rome's fair freedom seal'd,
 His lamp's last flash with brightest radiance shone,
 Who gave his offsprings' lives, now gave his own.
 But in the battle rang not on his ear
 The fell Erinny's' maddening voice of fear,
 When careless of his life, he drove his steed
 O'er the red plain with more than fury's speed.

Taught his proud foeman's hated breast to feel
 The force unspent of his avenging steel,
 Then wounded sunk to earth, resign'd his breath,
 While a smile linger'd on the lips of death.

And lives there one cold-hearted, who shall dare
 To say, no patriot spirit breathed there?
 Lives there the man, a wretch devoid of shame,
 To cast one blot upon so fair a fame?
 'Twas nobly done. Nor Rome forgot to raise
 A sacred tribute to her hero's praise:
 With the seven statues of the royal race,
 Wont in old time her Capitol to grace,
 There stood an eighth, the falchion in the hold
 Of that right hand "Avenging Brutus" told;
 And well th' imaginative eye might trace
 In the high features of that noble face.
 The indignant ire, which rose upon his brow
 When sad Lucretia told her tale of woe;
 The rigid, stern, inexorable look,
 When died his children by the headsman's stroke;
 And last the steady fire-glance of his eye,
 When Brutus feared not for his Rome to die.

Such were the men, O Rome, whose hands unfurl'd
Thy conquering banner, empress of the world ;
Such bade thine eagle bear to realms afar
Thy pride of might, thy thunderbolt of war :
They came, they saw, they conquer'd—all obey'd,
Till at thy feet the spoils of earth were laid,
Till their proud mistress from her seven-based throne
Beheld the world one empire and her own.

LEWIS GIDLEY,
EXETER COLLEGE.

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS:

A PRIZE POEM,

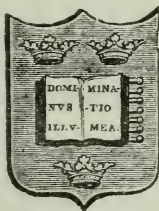
RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD;

JUNE 15, 1841.

BY

SAMUEL LUCAS, 1818 - 1868

QUEEN'S COLLEGE.



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M DCCC XLI.

SYNOPSIS.

INTRODUCTION—Train of ideas by which we may be led to the subject—The structure of the Islands—Their inhabitants—Want of information on their past History—Absence of tradition among themselves respecting their origin—Probable causes and manner of their first settlement—Their habits and mode of life in the Islands described—Employments and pleasures—The darker side of the picture—Debasing superstitions—Human sacrifices—Sanguinary nature of their wars—Prevalence of infanticide—Necessity of Missionary exertions—The approach of the Missionaries described—The consequences of their coming, in the beneficial change that has been effected by Christianity—Allusion to Cook—Return to England—Its instrumentality in the work of conversion—Conclusion.

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Ἐνθα μακάρων
[Νῆσους] ὠκεανίδες
Αὔραι περιπνέουσιν.

Pindar. Olymp. ii. 128.

ON Albion's shores, while blending shades of Eve
Their star-spread mantle in the twilight weave,
And whilst in peace it folds earth's wearied breast,
And pales the amber glories of the West ;
What if our thoughts, at that soft tranquil hour
That yields us captive to sweet Fancy's power,
Transported from the fading scene, should run
The self-same course with the departing sun,
Should whisper then, that while he thus restores
Night's gentle blessings to our heated shores,
To quench his fiery thirst he drinks the dew,
Deep in the plantain groves of Oahu.¹
That while our hills a length'ning shadow fling,
The wand'ring sea-bird, from his dripping wing,

¹ Oahu and Morokai, two of the largest islands of the Sandwich group. Oahu is remarkable for its fertility.

Scatters the briny drops of sun-lit spray
Over the coral rocks of Morokai.¹
Thus, as to musing thought these isles expand
In smiling contrast with our dark'ning strand,
They rise, as when night's shrouding pall withdrawn,
They hail'd the blush of young Creation's dawn,
Beat back the envious billows' circling foam,
And rose rejoicing in their Ocean home.

Beautiful Isles! whose aëry presence seems
To float before us in these waking dreams,
With what strange tales of Nature's wondrous powers
Your wave-worn cliffs might charm the willing hours,
Could they set forth the story of their youth,
Or foil conjecture with the light of truth.
Whether creation's throes disclosed their birth,
A common offspring with their kindred earth;
Or Nature's self, in her impatience, check'd
The toiling worm,²—her fairy architect—
Nor waiting till late ages should display
The growing isles that in her bosom lay,
Bade fire³ and earthquake from the deep repair,
To cleave their upward pathway to the air,

² The coral insect, whose operations are less conspicuous in the neighbourhood of the Sandwich Isles than in that of many other Islands of the Pacific.

³ Of the agency of fire in their construction, Ellis informs us that "the whole island of Hawaii, covering a space of four thousand square

And led them forth—her pride—her latest boast—
The youngest born of Ocean's countless host.

But these are nature's secrets,—and they lie
Inscribed, where Roa's⁴ peaks assail the sky,—
Traced in the torrents' path,—on rifted rock
Graved by the lightning's scath,—the earthquake's
 shock,

Or stamped still deeper on primeval stone
In characters to all, save One, unknown.
Nor less does humbler speculation fail
To knit the fragments of their broken tale,
Of whose past life, amid th' unconscious main,
Their graves the only records now remain.
Yes! the lone chieftain, wandering by the sea
That binds the towering steeps of Hawaii,⁵
Is now as silent of the dreamy past,
Or where his sires' less happy lot was cast,
As of the land where first the winds arose,
That bear their freight to Mouna⁶ Kea's snows,

miles, from the summit of its lofty mountains, perhaps fifteen or sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, down to the beach, is, according to every observation we could make, one complete mass of lava, or other volcanic matter, in different stages of decomposition." *Polynesian Researches*, vol. iii. ch. 10.

⁴ "Roa," or "Mouna Roa," one of the loftiest mountains of Hawaii.

⁵ "Hawaii," in the old orthography "Owhyhee," is the largest island of the Sandwich group.

⁶ In Cook's Voyages, Captain King states that the peaks of Mouna

Or of the climes that first the seedling bred
Of the fair flower he crushes with his tread.

Strange that no legend, or memorial lay,
Though rude its music, should recall the day
When the light bark, that erst his fathers bore,
Grated its prow on Puna's⁷ pebbly shore,—
When, willing exiles from their native land,
Or press'd by famine, or the spoiler's hand,
Taught by the shell-borne Nautilus—their sail
Aloft they spread before the driving gale,
Sped o'er the waves, that wash'd them with their
 spray,
No chart,—no compass, marshalling their way,
And ending here their toils,—forgot to roam—
And 'mid the waste of waters found a home.

How oft the summer's heat, the winter's showers,
Blest their long sojourn in their island bowers,

Kea appeared to be about half a mile high, and to be entirely covered with snow.

⁷ “Puna,” the south-western district of Hawaii, itself the most western of the Sandwich Isles, to which, both on account of its situation and superior elevation, colonists are likely to have been attracted, if it be true, as Ellis states, “that the evidences are strongest in favour of the derivation of their inhabitants from the Malayan tribes inhabiting the Asiatic Islands.” See *Polynesian Researches*, vol. i. c. 5.

Of these we know not, for the march of time
Pass'd unrecorded in that drowsy clime.
Lull'd in the haven of a calm repose,
Exempt from dangers, and secur'd from foes,
Supinely blest, no wants—no cares had they
Beyond the cravings of the passing day ;
Enough for them that Nature's bounty pour'd
Her wealth around them,—an exhaustless hoard ;
For sustenance they neither sow'd or till'd,
Or sought it but as wayward nature will'd :
Year after year, in that sweet solitude,
They saw her boon of summer fruits renew'd,
Watch'd the soft Uru's⁸ golden rind expand,
Till the ripe meal hung ready to their hand ;
Stripp'd from the Auti's⁹ bark their warp and woof,
Found in the palm's dark leaves a graceful roof ;
Or where the Cocoa's husky fruits decline,
Drank from its cup their unfermented wine.
Lords of those happy lands, where plenty yields
Spontaneous harvests from uncultur'd fields,
For them the beasts upon the mountains stray'd,
For them the wild fowl throng'd the forest glade ;
'Twas theirs to snare the songsters of the wood,
To net the scaly tenants of the flood,

⁸ "Uru," the native name of the celebrated bread fruit.

⁹ For a description of the Auti, or cloth plant, and its uses, see Poly. Res. vol. i. ch. 2.

Or guided by the torch, at close of day,
In dusky shallows to transfix their prey.

Yet light these labours,—for they left them free,
To rove, as fancy willed, o'er land and sea,—
To wander through the pathless wood,—to lave
Their swarthy limbs in stream or crystal wave,—
To dash in sport amid the blinding surf,—
To thread the dance upon the moon-lit turf,—
At morn to twine their hair with dewy flowers,
With song and jest to wake the drooping hours,—
At noon to seek beneath the Aoa's boughs,
A screen from heat,—a shelter for repose.¹⁰
Thus by no loftier joys or hopes inspir'd,—
Urged by no wants,—by no ambition fir'd,
The current of their being pass'd away,
Like the still waters of the coral bay,¹¹
Scarce ruffled by the blasts whose fury hurl'd
Conflicting tempests o'er a troubled world.

¹⁰ For this description of the mode of living in the Islands, reference may be again made to the *Polynesian Researches*.—For their methods of hunting and fishing, more especially by torch light,—their frequent bathing, and the use of flowers in the decoration of their persons, see vol. i. c. 6. For the use made of the leaves of the Palm tree in thatching their houses, vol. i. c. 7. The amusement of swimming in the surf, &c. is described, vol. iv. c. 14.

¹¹ “The surface of the water within the coral reef is placid and transparent; while that without, if there be the slightest breeze, is considerably agitated; and being unsheltered from the wind, is generally raised in high and foaming waves.” *Poly. Res.* vol. i. cap. 1.

Such was their lot that imaged forth the time
Of the world's infancy and golden prime,
Had erring nature that sure pathway trod
That leads to happiness,—that points to God.
But superstition's phantom garb array'd
Wild shapes that scar'd them in the midnight shade,
As oft they saw, careering in the storm,
Borne on the blast, Tairi's¹² meteor form,
Or watch'd the clouds whose bright'ning passage
told
Of Pelé's¹³ revels in her mountain hold.
From thought of these, dark tree and rugged stone
Assumed rude shapes of terror not their own,—
For these the Heiau's gloomy fabric stood,
Deep'ning the horrors of some lonely wood;
Nor e'en the whispering oaks in Mona's dell,
Of darker rites,—of sterner deeds could tell,
Than those reveal'd by the foul altar's light
That gleam'd portentous on the brow of night;

¹² "The natives were very desirous to shew us the place where the image of Tairi the war-god stood, and told us, that frequently in the evening he used to be seen flying about in the neighbourhood, in the form of a luminous substance like a flame, or like the tail of a comet." —Poly. Res. vol. iv. c. 5.

¹³ The natives believed the volcano at Kirauea to be the abode of their goddess Pelé.—For a description of the beautiful effect produced upon the clouds that passed over it by night, when seen from a distance, see Poly. Res. vol. iv. c. 9.

When of the band of thronging priests around,—
Of idol forms with sacred cinèt ¹⁴ bound,—
Of those rude walls that caught the lurid glare,
Scarce aught seem'd human, save the victim, there.
Hence oft fell omens urg'd the kindling fight,
The strife of subtlety and savage might,
And Pari's ¹⁵ ridges echo'd back the yell
Of those who struggling fought, or yielding fell.
Then was their burst destructive as the tide
Of fiery desolation, from the side
Of that tall mount,¹⁶ whose giant shadow lay
Dark'ning the morn on green Kairua's bay.
And if at times their passions, lull'd to rest,
Slept like the fires within the mountain's breast,
No soft'ning impulse in their hearts arose,
As round the crater's edge no verdure grows:
In such a soil affection withering died,
For all its springs were clos'd,—its fountains dried.
No social bliss could cheer life's dreary span,
For woman was the powerless slave of man:

¹⁴ The cinèt with which the idols were covered, was a species of rough matting made of the fibres of the bark of the Cocoa nut tree.

¹⁵ "The Pari of Anuanu was an important position in times of war, and the parties in possession of it were usually masters of the island. In its vicinity, the independence of Oahu was lost in or about the year 1790."—Poly. Res. vol. iv. c. 1.

¹⁶ Mouna Huararai, in the side of which is situated the volcano of Kirauea.

Few joys of offspring check'd the wish to roam,
Or cast a spell around his sullen home ;
His infants' claims provok'd guilt's foulest stain,
And stamp'd his portion with the curse of Cain.
Oft as the sleeping babe unconscious smil'd,
A mother's yearnings pleaded for her child,
Yet heedless of her tears,—her prayers to save,
A father's hand consign'd it to the grave,
To wake no more, until its spirit stand
In sweet communion with that glorious band
Of cherub angels,¹⁷ who before the Throne
For that frail sinful race make aye their ceaseless moan.

* Nor is that cry in vain,—though voiceless all
Heaven's angel host, yet Mercy hears their call :
And Mercy's answer is the whispering gale
That smooths the folds in yonder swelling sail,
And speeds in safety through the salt sea foam
That goodly vessel to its destin'd home.
Yes ! from the bosom of the Eastern wave
The ministers of Mercy come to save,—
To those benighted islands to proclaim
The joyful tidings of a Saviour's name.
Their fervent zeal has mark'd with deep'ning awe
How long those isles have waited for His law.¹⁸

¹⁷ For the idea contained in these lines, the writer is indebted to the author of "The Pelican Island."

¹⁸ "And the Isles shall wait for His law." Isaiah xlii. 4.

They come,—for blessed promise to prepare
The glorious way to glad fulfilment there.
High are their hopes, as even now they keep
Their midnight watch upon the star-lit deep,
Still waiting till the Orient shall display
Its glowing presage of that brighter day,
Whose dawning beams on those fair lands shall quell
The powers of darkness and the fiends of Hell.

How blest these hopes,—what ample fruits repaid
Their after toils, through Mercy's viewless aid,
Let the wild echoes of Kairua tell,
Or Kona's cliffs that breast the ocean's swell,
For they have found a voice responsive there
To Christian accents breathing praise and prayer,—
Praise of the one true God, where once there stood
Tane's altars reeking with the captive's blood,
And prayer in solitudes, that heard alone
The victor's shout,—the victim's dying groan.
Their Heiau's walls, by native hands laid low,
Their purpose changed, a holier office know,¹⁹
And dark Idolatry no more may claim
Those temples sacred to Jehovah's name.

¹⁹ At Kairua, Ellis relates that, while he was there, "upwards of fifty persons were employed in carrying stones from an old Heiau, which they were pulling down, to raise the ground, and lay the foundation of a place of worship."—Poly. Res. vol. iv. c. 15.

Religion's soothing voice at length imparts
Her softening lessons to their savage hearts ;
Oft, as the spirit of a breathless calm ²⁰
Sleeps in the unsway'd shadows of the palm,
Beneath the grateful shade they sit,—and tell
How Rono ²¹ thither came,—how Rono fell ;—
And gentler promptings teach their lips, though late,
To bless his coming,—and bewail his fate.
What if no cenotaph enshrines his bones,
A nation's gratitude their crime atones ;
Though with his laurels twine no poet's bays,
A nobler anthem may proclaim his praise ;
For oft the mariner, at close of day,
While 'mid those Isles he tracks his dark'ning way,
Hears, softly stealing through the twilight dim,
From yonder shores, the holy evening hymn,—
Wafting a happy presage to his ear,
That genial hearts and helping hands are near,—
That there a friendly welcome would be found,
Where Christian faith, and Christian laws have bound
In one wide brotherhood,—one vast embrace,—
The swarthy savage and his paler race,
—Links of that heavenly chain that Mercy wove,
To compass peace and harmony and love.

²⁰ “ *Φρόνημα μὲν νηνέμου γαλάνας.*”—Æsch. Agam. 717.

²¹ “Rono,” the name by which the natives designated the unfortunate Cook ; of whom they assert, that “they thought he was their god Rono, worshipped him as such, and after his death revered his bones.”—Poly. Res. vol. iv. c. 5.

But twilight scenes like these recall once more
 Their parent musings on our island shore ;
 Albion ! to thee once more our thoughts incline,
 From lands of which Discovery's meed was thine,
 In that proud day that bade a nation leap,
 As 'twere a new creation, from the deep,—
 That fill'd a blank on Nature's living page,
 To stand thy record to a distant age.
 Yet is a loftier boast within thy power,
 Than the chance glories of one happy hour ;
 Fire from his central hearth the Grecian bore,²²
 Who led his followers to a foreign shore ;
 But Albion's sons to these lone isles have brought,
 A gift that far surpass'd the Grecian's thought,—
 Fire from His shrine, whom earth and heaven obey,
 And worlds to last when these have pass'd away ;
 No earthly flame that warms th' insensate clod,
 But fire from altars of the living God.

²² Among other customs observed at the departure of colonists, they were wont to take fire from the Prytaneum of the mother-town ; and if ever that fire happened to be extinguished in the colony, it became necessary to go back to the mother-city to rekindle it.—See Larcher's Notes to Herodotus, book i. chap. 146 ; book v. chap. 42.

CHARLES THE TWELFTH,

3

A PRIZE POEM,

by

John Campbell Shairp (1819-1885)

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE VIII, MDCCCXLII.



OXFORD,

FRANCIS MACPHERSON.

1842.

SYNOPSIS.

Charles in childhood—Charles after Pultowa—the contrast—The causes of the change—Scene on Pultowa the evening after the battle described—Flight into Turkey—Sees the last remnants of his army taken by the Russians as he crosses the frontier stream—Feelings at this crisis—Heroic manner in which he afterwards bears his fall—Sustained by hopes of the future and the remembrance of past glory—These remembrances described—including descent on Denmark—Narva—Passage of the Dwina—Field of Clissau on the morning of the battle, contrasted with its present aspect—The summit of his power—The Russian campaign—His overthrow as much the effect of the severe winter of 1705 as of the Czar's troops—His return to Sweden after long exile—Death before Frederickshall—Reflections.

¹ " In the palace of Stroemsholm there is a still finer picture whole length of Charles XII. in the ninth year of his age, leaning on a noble lion's head. Charles is here represented as a most beautiful boy: both his physiognomy and appearance are soft and effeminate, and (except in the lustre of his eye) by no means indicative of his subsequent character." Coxe's Travels in Scandinavia, vol. 3.

" There is in every human countenance either a prophecy or a history which must sadden or at least soften every reflecting observer." Coleridge's Literary Remains, vol. 1.

CHARLES THE TWELFTH.

Ἐν βιότῳ προτελείῳις
Ἄμειρον, εὐφιλόπαιδα,
Καὶ γεραροῖς ἐπίχαρτον.

* * *
Χρονισθεῖς δ' ἀπείδειζεν
Ἔλος τὸ πρόσθε τοκῆων.

Æschylus, Agamemnon, 720.

IN that high dome¹, where Sweden's pictur'd kings,
Time-honor'd 'mid the unceasing change of things,
Chieftains and heroes—names of old renown—
Their day of warfare o'er, look calmly down,
Loveliest and noblest of his kingly race,
One child encircled with unfading grace
Brightens the air, around him and above,
With boyhood's golden light of peace and love.
Such radiant innocence, such cloudless mirth,
Dawn with the springtime o'er the laughing earth,
What time she calls from every green recess,
To wake the life of vernal loveliness.
Well may ye deem no shade of care or crime
Shall dim the sunshine of his morning prime,
Deem that this trance shall ne'er dissolve to show,
How life's first vision hides a world of woe.

Would it were thus ! O would that we might win
No other presage of the soul within !
But that bright eye hath glances too intense,
Too full, methinks, of storm and turbulence ;
Behind the silence of those features lie
Unwakened thoughts, a voice, a prophecy :
The hour is nigh—yet *here*, thou Conqueror wild
Dream on for ever, be for aye a child !

Again I saw that face erewhile so fair,
So bright in boyhood—but a change was there ;
A change of soul and aspect—many a storm
Had swept in anger o'er his manly form,
And darkened round his exile ; childhood's gleam
Was now no more than a forgotten dream ;
The prophecy fulfilled, a history now
Had traced its charact'ry on that stern brow :
Say whence this tale of woe ? alas ! too well
Thou dread Pultowa ! it is thine to tell.

Lo ! o'er thy battle plain another day,
In silence fleeting from the world away !
Another eve, and hush'd each living breath,
Mute Nature sorrowing o'er the field of death !
For through that silence on that lingering light
Full many a soul must wing its last long flight !
There on the cold earth 'neath the cold night sky
They sink together, foes with foes to die :
No hand to aid, no voice of kindness near,
To fall in music on their dying ear,

There in grim conflict with the unearthly Power
They wait the coming of the awful hour.
In that dread moment, when the pulse still beats
Faintly and feebly in "life's last retreats,"
Perchance the raven's² heavy-pinioned flight,
Darkly descending on the fall of night,
Startles some sleeper wildly from his dream,
Death's ghastly shadow ; but so faint his scream,
His hand so nerveless may not scare away
The bird that waits not for a lifeless prey.

Yet think not of the dead—mourn not for them,
They are at rest, and ask no requiem ;
But mourn for him, too sternly taught by fate
Earth was not made for man to desolate :
Queller of nations—the unconquered one—
Now crownless, realmless, homeless, all undone.
Yes, while the stars their pitying radiance shed,
O'er pale Pultowa and the slumbering dead,
Nightly they rose, the unpeopled desert o'er,
To guide his flight, who ne'er had fled before,
Till morn was breaking on the frontier steep,
Where Moslem sentinels their vigils keep.
Then o'er the waters to the royal Swede³,
Weary and wounded on his path of speed,

² See Mazeppa, xviii.

³ "It was some time before boats sufficient to transport the whole could be provided, by which accident five hundred Swedes and Cossacks fell into the hands of the enemy, who continued their pursuit quite to the banks of the river Bogh. This loss affected

There came a cry—the conqueror's savage boast—
O'er the poor remnants of his perished host.
He paused, he gazed upon that other shore,
Where suppliant ranks their chieftains aid implore,
And plead with all the eloquence that lies
In veteran looks and glorious memories;
In vain—the arm that taught the world to bow,
The unconquered arm—it hath no vengeance now.
And can he nought but weep? must bitter tears
Flow from the fountain that hath slept for years?
It was a rueful hour—what tongue may tell
The anguish of a warrior's last farewell?
The pang that wrung from that heroic eye
The tears of burning speechless agony?
Shame, grief, remorse, that pause concentrated all,
The consummation of a mighty fall;
The dreary gathering in one hour of doom
Of all that's darkest on this side the tomb.

'Tis past—that brow is calm—no cloud is there,
The soul within has wrestled down despair.
Yes! he was kingly in his day of pride,
When erst from Warsaw waved his banners wide:
How doubly glorious now with front elate,
He stands unstooping in his hour of fate!

the king more than all the former sufferings consequent on the defeat of Pultowa. He shed tears at seeing across the river the greater part of his few remaining friends carried away into captivity, without his having it in his power to offer them relief or assistance." Universal History, vol. 30.

Aye, his the pride, the all-enduring will⁴,
'Mid sternest suffering, how serenely still !
Others are drooping round him—his the mood
That will not yield, and cannot be subdued :
E'en now with light from memory's regions cast,
The future shines all glorious as the past,
And dreams and visions from the tented plain,
Come wildly gleaming o'er his soul again.

So, when the winds that raved the live-long night,
Have stilled their tumult with the dawning light,
So have I seen the cloud-rack fast and free,
Come thronging onward from the distant sea
Along the hill-tops, till the rising sheen
Of morn had spread their parted woof between,
And laughed away the masses dark and dull
Into a radiance glad and beautiful ;
E'en thus the glorious past came floating by,
O'er the dark chambers of his memory ;
Revealed before him in long line he saw
Denmark and Narva, Dwina and Clissaù,
Each with its throng of phantom hosts appears,
Bathed in the light of unforgotten years.

⁴ “ Une si facheuse situation, après le disastre que l'on venoit d'essuyer, répandoit la tristesse sur le visage d'en chacun. Il faut pourtant en excepter de roi ; car ce Prince paroissoit toujours le même : nulle crainte apparente, nul changement dans son visage, et nulle plainte dans sa bouche.” Puff. Hist. de Suede, vol. 3.

Again his father-land before him lay,
Bright with the dawning of his early day;
And long may Sweden, from her wave-worn steep,
Watch the morn kindling on the orient deep,
Ere such another o'er her hills and streams
Shall pour the promise of its rising beams.
Again the awakening voice of war is rolled
Onward from cliff to cliff, from hold to hold,
Till hill and plain with every peasant's home,
From southern headland to the northern foam,
Have heard the mustering trump proclaim to men
A new Gustavus is on earth again!
Once more he listened, while the morning gale
Whispered of triumph through his swelling sail;
Once more he kindles, while with eagle swoop
His banded hosts on cowering Denmark stoop,
And vows, as erst, amid the cannon's roar,
This shall my music be for evermore⁵.

Then o'er him swept, as with a wing of flame,
All that awakes at Narva's deathless name,
And Dwina's flood before him rolled its wave,
Dark with the life-blood of the patriot brave.
There Poland's squadrons down the headlong steep
Strong as a whirlwind to the onset sweep,
There Stenau's lance and Courland's lordly plume⁶
Brighten the darkness of the battle gloom,

⁵ "This henceforth shall be my music." See Voltaire.

⁶ Mareschal Stenau and the Duke of Courland led the Poles.

While front to front with names of martial pride
 Renschild and Holstein struggle side by side⁷
 Amid the wavering van, that spent and foiled
 Like broken billows from the shock recoiled.
 "Onward for Sweden!" hark yon voice of might!
 It stems, it turns the current of the fight,
 'Mid thronging myriads the commanding form,
 The cloud-compeller of the living storm;
 'Tis Sweden's Hero, his the arm that wields
 The doom of empires and the fate of fields.

An hundred years have rolled, since yonder sun⁸
 Beheld a crown on Clissau lost and won.
 There stood two nations in their war-array,
 Two rival kings—but they have passed away.
 And now when morn is dawning there serene,
 The dew lies glistening, and the grass is green
 Above a thousand graves.—How calm they rest,
 The weary ones upon earth's quiet breast!
 What tho' their sleep be all unwept and lone!
 Nature round them a mother's arms has thrown,
 And o'er their beds the skylarks soar and sing
 Their morning carols thro' the early spring.

⁷ Two of the Swedish Generals.———"They (the Swedes) gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The King of Sweden rallied them in a moment, above his middle in water, as easily as if he had been exercising at a review." Voltaire.

⁸ "The two Kings met on the 13th of July, in the year 1702, in a vast plain near Clissau, between Warsaw and Cracow." Voltaire.

Yes! one deep quiet—one entire repose
Broods o'er that resting-place of friends and foes,
And the green hillocks, with their gentle swell,
Are all the record that remains to tell,
How Sweden triumphed, and how Poland fell.

From Clissau's field adown the golden west
The sun went hasting to his ocean rest;
But e'er he sank, one glance of glory came
To greet the Conqueror on his field of fame.
Strange that no boding, no prophetic fear
Foretold the sunset of his own career!
Yet why?—'mid fallen potentates he stood
Kingly, like Calpe, in his solitude,
And earth lay hushed around him: dark and vast
His shadow fell on many a nation cast;
It swept o'er humbled Denmark, eastward far
It flung its terror o'er the haughty Czar;
Behind him Poland low in ruin lay,
Before him Austria crouching in dismay!
And, England, e'en thy chief of proudest fame
Paused in the presence of a prouder name⁹.

And O! if ere there burst o'er earth and sea
That thrilling sound—a nation's jubilee,

⁹ See the account of Marlborough's visit to Charles at Altraustad, where he received embassies from almost all the Kings of Christendom. Voltaire, Trans. p. 98.

E'en then it woke in the triumphal song,
That rolled and revelled Sweden's hills along.
Ah! proud the pæan hymn—but fate hath thrown
O'er these high notes sad music all its own.
Lo! round the Invader's march the sullen mood
Of winter in his Scythian solitude,
With death and famine leagued!—doth Sweden's
son

Deem these will own him as earth's kings have done?
Ah fated chief! e'en now their awful breath
Has chilled his legions with the blight of death:
Before him lies the desert, and behind
The sounds of vengeance deepen on the wind;
From Moscow's towers they come—a mighty
throng—

As death insatiate, as the tempest strong.
Round Sweden's host is poured the banded might
Of Tartar wild, and hardy Muscovite;
Rings o'er the field of death their savage glee—
The work is done—the Invader where is he?

Fair the awakening, fair the blush of bloom,
When spring-time bursts on winter's months of
gloom,
And loud with song and glad with sunlight thrills
Far through the dark woods and the silent hills.
Aye, fair the spring-time, but who hath not seen
More cloudless splendour, glory more serene
Cast on the earth!—how brightly, briefly cast!
When autumn paused in love to look its last,

Paused on the threshold of the western sky,
Lingering at sunset as though loth to die ?
E'en such a gleam—so fleeting and so fair,
One moment lightened Sweden's long despair,
One moment woke his widow'd realms to sing
Strains of high welcome for their long-lost king ;
How soon to cease ! how soon shall tears be shed,
And requiems chanted for the warrior dead !

Athwart the vault of midnight deep and lone
The Arctic winter deeper gloom had thrown ;
Night's heavenly warders, with unsleeping eye,
Kept watch along the battlements on high
Above the slumbering world, while darkness fell
On leaguring host and leagured citadel.
But *one* there slumbered not, *one* lawless will
Still dreamt of strife, tho' earth would fain be still,
Still dreamt of strife—but hush ! he dreams no more—
There rung his knell, the life-long conflict o'er !
E'en like a wayward child with sleep opprest,
Sinking at day-fall on its mother's breast,
Earth's strongest son, her tempest-child of might
Lies hushed for ever in the arms of night.

O ! ask not now if retribution just
Taught the proud Swede dominion is but dust—
If it was well that kings should learn, though late,
The hopes and fears of man to venerate.
O turn we rather from his wild career
To gaze with awe upon his silent bier,

With the still night around—the stars above,
Those ancient teachers with their looks of love ;
The self-same stars, that o'er man's troubled years
So long have shone from their eternal spheres :
Ages beneath have perished—they abide,
And night by night their stillness seems to chide
This changeful life—the ceaseless ebb and flow,
The weary turmoil of the world below.
Yea, these enduring heavens and this green earth—
That day by day since young creation's birth
With all their loving language never cease
To plead with man and call him back to peace,—
O teach they not that wars and tempests lie
Encompassed with a dread tranquillity,
That man's unquiet years of storm and strife
Are but as moments in the deeper life ¹⁰
Of the Eternal Silence, on whose breast
All earthly discord sinks in perfect rest?

JOHN CAMPBELL SHAIRP,
BALLIOL COLLEGE.

¹⁰ “ Man's noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.”

Wordsworth.



CROMWELL :

A PRIZE POEM,

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD;

JUNE 28, 1843.

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD, (1822-1832)

BALLIOL COLLEGE.

SECOND EDITION.



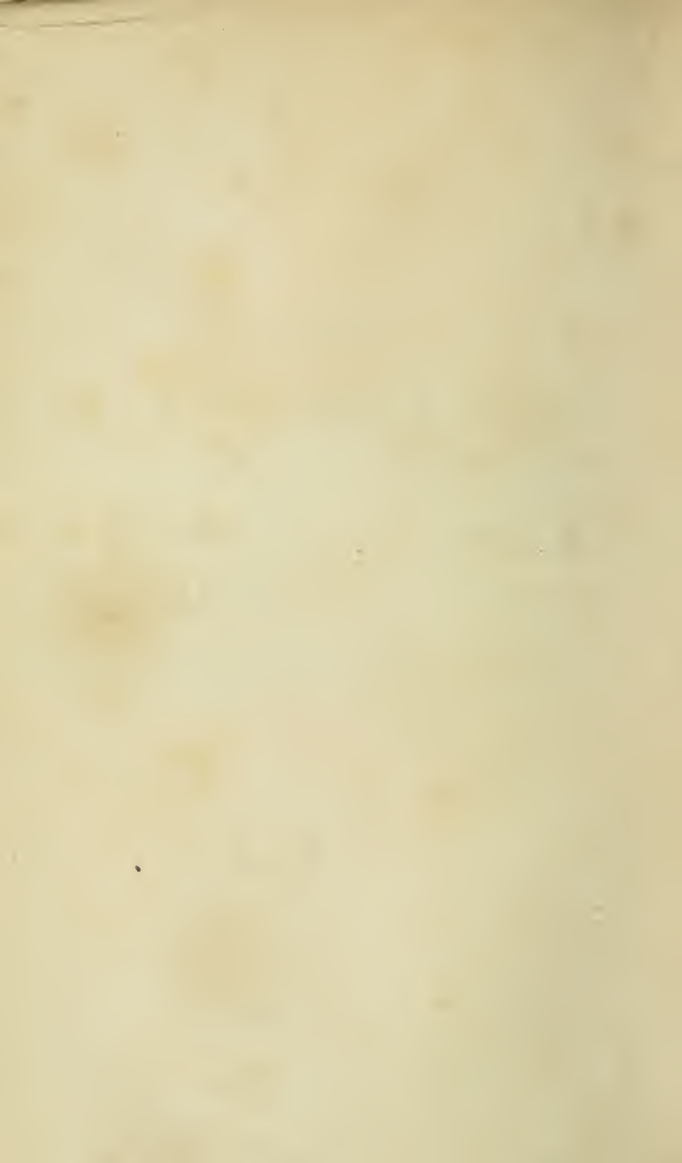
OXFORD :

T. AND G. SHRIMPTON, BROAD STREET,

M DCCC LXIII.

SYNOPSIS.

INTRODUCTION—The mountains and the sea the cradles of Freedom—contrasted with the birth-place of Cromwell—His childhood and youth—The germs of his future character probably formed during his life of inaction.—Cromwell at the moment of his intended embarkation—Retrospect of his past life and profligate youth—Temptations held out by the prospect of a life of rest in America—How far such rest was allowable—Vision of his future life—Different persons represented in it—Charles the First—Cromwell himself—His victories and maritime glory—Pym—Strafford—Laud—Hampden—Falkland—Milton—Charles the First—Cromwell on his death-bed—His character—Dispersion of the vision—Conclusion.



CROMWELL.

Schrecklich ist, es, deiner Wahrheit
Sterbliches Gefäss zu seyn.

SCHILLER.

HIGH fate is theirs, ye sleepless waves, whose ear
Learns Freedom's lesson from your voice of fear;
Whose spell-bound sense from childhood's hour hath
known

Familiar meanings in your mystic tone:
Sounds of deep import—voices that beguile
Age of its tears and childhood of its smile,
To yearn with speechless impulse to the free
And gladsome greetings of the buoyant sea!
* High fate is theirs, who where the silent sky
Stoops to the soaring mountains, live and die;

* This is in allusion to the idea expressed in the twelfth of
Mr. Wordsworth's Sonnets to Liberty:—

“Two voices are there: one is of the sea,” &c.
contrasting it with the fact of Cromwell's birth-place having
been the fen country of Huntingdonshire, where he lived till he
was forty years old.

Who scale the cloud-capt height, or sink to rest
In the deep stillness of its shelt'ring breast;—
Around whose feet the exulting waves have sung,
The eternal hills their giant shadows flung.

No wonders nurs'd thy childhood; not for thee
Did the waves chant their song of liberty!
Thine was no mountain home, where Freedom's form
Abides enthron'd amid the mist and storm,
And whispers to the listening winds, that swell
With solemn cadence round her citadel!
These had no sound for thee: that cold calm eye
Lit with no rapture as the storm swept by,
To mark with shiver'd crest the reeling wave
Hide his torn head beneath his sunless cave;
Or hear 'mid circling crags, the impatient cry
Of the pent winds, that scream in agony!
Yet all high sounds that mountain children hear
Flash'd from thy soul upon thine inward ear;
All Freedom's mystic language—storms that roar
By hill or wave, the mountain or the shore,—
All these had stirr'd thy spirit, and thine eye
In common sights read secret sympathy;
Till all bright thoughts that hills or waves can yield
Deck'd the dull waste, and the familiar field;
Or wondrous sounds from tranquil skies were borne
Far o'er the glistening sheets of windy corn:

Skies—that, unbound by clasp of mountain chain,
Slope stately down, and melt into the plain;
Sounds—such as erst the lone wayfaring man
 ^b Caught, as he journeyed, from the lips of Pan;
 ^c Or that mysterious cry, that smote with fear,
Like sounds from other worlds, the Spartan's ear,
While o'er the dusty plain, the murmurous throng
Of Heaven's embattled myriads swept along.

Say not such dreams are idle: for the man
Still toils to perfect what the child began;
And thoughts, that were but outlines, time engraves
Deep on his life; and childhood's baby waves,
Made rough with care, become the changeful sea,
Stemm'd by the strength of manhood fearlessly;
And fleeting thoughts, that on the lonely wild
Swept o'er the fancy of that heedless child,
Perchance had quicken'd with a living truth
The cold dull soil of his unfruitful youth;
Till with his daily life, a life that threw
Its shadows o'er the future flower'd and grew,
With common cares unmingling, and apart,
Haunting the shrouded chambers of his heart;
Till life unstirr'd by action, life became
Threaded and lighten'd by a track of flame;

^b *Herod.* vi. 106.

^c The vision of Demaratus on the plain of Eleusis.—*Herod.* viii. 65.

An inward light, that, with its streaming ray
On the dark current of his changeless day,
Bound all his being with a silver chain—
Like a swift river through a silent plain!

High thoughts were his, when by the gleaming
flood,
With heart new strung, and stern resolve, he stood;
Where rode the tall dark ships, whose loosen'd sail
All idly flutter'd in the eastern gale;^d
High thoughts were his; but Memory's glance the
while
Fell on the cherish'd past with tearful smile;
And peaceful joys and gentler thoughts swept by,
Like summer lightnings o'er a darken'd sky.
The peace of childhood, and the thoughts that roam,
Like loving shadows, round that childhood's home;
Joys that had come and vanish'd, half unknown,
Then slowly brighten'd, as the days had flown;
Years that were sweet or sad, becalm'd or toss'd
On life's wild waves—the living and the lost.
Youth stain'd with follies: and the thoughts of ill
Crush'd, as they rose, by manhood's sterner will.
Repentant prayers, that had been strong to save;
And the first sorrow, which is childhood's grave!

^d Eight ships, lying in the Thames, and ready to sail, were detained by order of Council.—*Hume*, vi. 309.

All shapes that haunt remembrance—soft and fair,
Like a green land at sunset, all were there!
Eyes that he knew, old faces unforget,
Gaz'd sadly down on his unrestful lot,
And Memory's calm clear voice, and mournful eye,
Chill'd every buoyant hope that floated by;
Like frozen winds on southern vales that blow
From a far land—the children of the snow—
O'er flowering plain and blossom'd meadow fling
The cold dull shadow of their icy wing.

Then Fancy's roving visions, bold and free,
A moment dispossess'd reality.
All airy hopes that idle hearts can frame,
Like dreams between two sorrows, went and came:
Fond hearts that fain would clothe the unwelcome
truth
Of toilsome manhood in the dreams of youth,
To bend in rapture at some idle throne,
Some lifeless soulless phantom of their own;
Some shadowy vision of a tranquil life,
Of joys unclouded, years unstirr'd by strife;
Of sleep unshadow'd by a dream of woe;
Of many a lawny hill, and streams with silver flow;
Of giant mountains by the western main,
The sunless forest, and the sealike plain;
Those lingering hopes of coward hearts, that still
Would play the traitor to the stedfast will,

One moment's space, perchance, might charm his eye
From the stern future, and the years gone by.
One moment's space might waft him far away
To western shores—the death-place of the day!
Might paint the calm, sweet peace—the rest of home,
Far o'er the pathless waste of labouring foam—
Peace, that recall'd his childish hours anew,
More calm, more deep, than childhood ever knew!
Green happy places, like a flowery lea
Between the barren mountains and the stormy sea.

O pleasant rest, if once the race were run!
O happy slumber, if the day were done!
Dreams that were sweet at eve, at morn were sin;
With cares to conquer, and a goal to win!
His were no tranquil years—no languid sleep—
No life of dreams—no home beyond the deep—
No softening ray—no visions false and wild—
No glittering hopes on life's grey distance smiled—
Like isles of sunlight on a mountain's brow,
Lit by a wandering gleam, we know not how,
Far on the dim horizon, when the sky
With glooming clouds broods dark and heavily.

Then his eye slumber'd, and the chain was broke
That bound his spirit, and his heart awoke;
Then, like a kingly river swift and strong,
The future roll'd its gathering tides along!

The shout of onset and the shriek of fear
Smote, like the rush of waters, on his ear ;
And his eye kindled with the kindling fray,
The surging battle and the mail'd array !
All wondrous deeds the coming days should see,
And the long Vision of the years to be.
Pale phantom hosts, like shadows, faint and far,
Councils, and armies, and the pomp of war !
And one sway'd all, who wore a kingly crown,
Until another rose and smote him down :
A form that tower'd above his brother men ;
A form he knew—but it was shrouded then !
With stern, slow steps, unseen yet still the same,
By leaguer'd tower and tented field it came ;
By Naseby's hill, o'er Marston's heathy waste,
By Worcester's field, the warrior-vision pass'd !
From their deep base, thy beetling cliffs, Dunbar,
Rang, as he trode them, with the voice of war !
The soldier kindled at his words of fire ;
The statesman quail'd before his glance of ire !
Worn was his brow with cares no thought could scan ;
His step was loftier than the steps of man ;
* And the winds told his glory, and the wave
Sonorous witness to his empire gave !

* " It is just to say, that the maritime glory of England may first be traced from the era of the Commonwealth in a track of continuous light."—*Hallam's Const. Hist.* ii.

What forms are these, that with complaining sound,
And slow reluctant steps are gathering round?
Forms that with him shall tread life's changing
stage,

Cross his lone path, or share his pilgrimage.
There, as he gazed, a wond'rous band—they came
Pym's look of hate, and Strafford's glance of flame:
There Laud, with noiseless steps and glittering eye,
In priestly garb, a frail old man, went by;
His drooping head bowed meekly on his breast;
His hands were folded, like a saint at rest!
‘There Hampden bent him o’er his saddle bow,
And death’s cold dews bedimm’d his earnest brow;
Still turn’d to watch the battle—still forgot
Himself, his sufferings, in his country’s lot!
§ There Falkland eyed the strife that would not cease,
Shook back his tangled locks, and murmur’d—
“Peace!”

With feet that spurn’d the ground, lo! Milton there
Stood like a statue; and his face was fair—
Fair beyond human beauty; and his eye,
That knew not earth, soar’d upwards to the sky!

‡ “His head bending down, and his hands resting on his horse’s neck, he was seen riding from the field.”—*Lord Nugent’s Memorials of Hampden*, ii. 435.

§ “In his clothes and habit, which he had minded before always with more neatness and industry, he was now, not only incurious, but negligent.”—*Clarendon*.

^h He, too, was there—it was the princely boy,
The child-companion of his childish joy!
But oh! how chang'd! those deathlike features wore
Childhood's bright glance and sunny smile no more!
That brow so sad, so pale, so full of care—
What trace of careless childhood linger'd there?
What spring of youth in that majestic mien,
So sadly calm, so kingly, so serene?
No—all was chang'd! the monarch wept alone,
Between a ruin'd church and shatter'd throne!
Friendless and hopeless—like a lonely tree,
On some bare headland straining mournfully,
That all night long its weary moan doth make
To the vex'd waters of a mountain lake!
Still, as he gaz'd, the phantom's mournful glance
Shook the deep slumber of his deathlike trance;
Like some forgotten strain that haunts us still,
That calm eye follow'd, turn him where he will;
Till the pale monarch, and the long array,
Pass'd, like a morning mist, in tears away!

Then all his dream was troubled, and his soul
Thrill'd with a dread no slumber could control;
On that dark form his eyes had gaz'd before,
Nor known it then;—but it was veil'd no more!

^h Alluding to the stories of Cromwell's childish intimacy with Charles the First.

In broad clear light the ghastly vision shone,—
 That form was his,—those features were his own!
 The night of terrors, and the day of care,
 The years of toil—all, all were written there!
 Sad faces watch'd around him, and his breath
 Came faint and feeble in the embrace of death.
ⁱ The gathering tempest, with its voice of fear,
^k His latest loftiest music, smote his ear!
^l That day of boundless hope and promise high,
 That day that hail'd his triumphs, saw him die!
 Then from those whitening lips, as death drew near,
^m The imprisoning chains fell off, and all was clear!
 Like lowering clouds, that at the close of day,
 Bath'd in a blaze of sunset, melt away;
 And with its clear calm tones, that dying prayer
 Cheer'd all the failing hearts that sorrow'd there!

A life—whose ways no human thought could scan;
 A life—that was not as the life of man;

ⁱ Clarendon mentions a great storm which attended the death of Cromwell.

^k “He was a great lover of music, and he entertained the most skilful in that science in his pay and family.”—*Perfect Politician*.

^l Cromwell died on his fortunate day, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, September 3rd.

^m There is a remarkable contrast between the perfect clearness of the celebrated prayer Cromwell is recorded to have uttered on his death-bed, and the confusedness of the speeches which are attributed to him.

A life—that wrote its purpose with a sword,
Moulding itself into action, not in word!
Rent with tumultuous thoughts, whose conflict rung
Deep through his soul, and chok'd his faltering tongue;
A heart that reck'd not of the countless dead,
That strew'd the blood-stain'd path where Empire led;
A daring hand, that shrunk not to fulfil
The thought that spurr'd it; and a dauntless will,
Bold action's parent; and a piercing ken
Through the dark chambers of the hearts of men,
To read each thought, and teach that master-mind
The fears and hopes and passions of mankind;
All these were thine—oh thought of fear!—and thou,
Stretch'd on that bed of death, art nothing now.

Then all his vision faded, and his soul
Sprang from its sleep! and lo! the waters roll
Once more beneath him; and the fluttering sail,
Where the dark ships rode proudly, woo'd the gale;
And the wind murmur'd round him, and he stood
Once more alone beside the gleaming flood.



BATTLE OF THE NILE.

A PRIZE POEM,

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE 20, 1844.

BY

JOSEPH L. BRERETON, ¹⁸²²⁻¹⁹⁰¹

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

SECOND EDITION.



OXFORD:

T. AND G. SHRIMPTON, BROAD STREET,

M DCCO LXIII.

H. ALDEN, PRINTER, OXFORD.

BATTLE OF THE NILE.

THOU memory-haunted sea, to glory dear,
Whose classic shores their deathless fabrics rear ;
Home of the free ! thy conscious waves could tell
Of old Athena's wooden citadel ;
Thy virgin waters nurs'd the infant sail
That venturous Tyre first trusted to the gale ;
And thou hast listen'd to the Afric blast,
Whilst widow'd Carthage mourn'd her empire past ;
And Rome exulting could thine echoes rouse,
To the glad music of her laurell'd prows.

Lift thy proud waters ! rear thy glist'ning crest !
For Albion's warriors ride thy throbbing breast.
Staunch as the oak that ribs their vessel's side,
True as the compass, dauntless as the tide,
Each heart beats worthy of their chieftain's fame,
Each soul is kindled with his soul of flame !

Yet^a deem not theirs the zeal that pants for strife,
The thirst for blood—the recklessness of life;
No wild ambition with its boundless span,
The praise of History, but the scourge of man;
No restless lust—no avarice led them on,
No dreams of empires gained, and golden conquests
won.

By the blue margin of Aboukir's bay,
The Gallic fleet in safety's slumber lay;
Each spiry mast with pencill'd tracery deck'd
Seemed the mere whim of Fancy's architect—
So slight, so lofty! not a sail was spread;
The breeze sigh'd gently o'er the watery bed.
Ah seeming rest! fond ignorance of woe!
The bright waves glitter o'er a tomb below.

Mark yonder vessels crowding into sight!
'Tis Nelson's squadron, racing to the fight.
Heard ye that shout? glad sound to Ocean's ear!
'Twas Bravery's eloquence—a British cheer!^b

^a Contrast Napoleon's Proclamations to his army before setting out for Egypt.

^b When Hood, in the *Zealous*, made signal that the enemy was in sight, a cheer of anticipated triumph burst from every ship in the English fleet.

On, on they press, like falcons in the chace,
Each would be foremost in the glorious race!
Each feels the gush of valour's generous tide,
Glow on each hardy cheek the warrior pride.
One prayer half whisper'd—but no coward's cry,
One thought of home—but no reluctant sigh!
What though the foes their angry welcome fling,
Though wings of flame the iron tempest bring,
Though crash the masts, though burst the sails in
twain,

And the thick grape-shot rends the whiten'd main,—
Undaunted still, Britannia's heroes bide
The deadly storm, and seek the foeman's side.
No useless gun,^c no hurried movement tells
The spurious valour that Inaction quells:
Till ship with ship, till foe with foeman meets,
And one dark wave upholds the hostile fleets.
Each gun found utterance then; then burst the force
Of battle's tide—Oh! who may stem its course?
Then Terror pray'd for life—what prayer shall speed?
The death-shriek told its anguish—who shall heed?
Then flow'd the blood-stream—whose the trickling
life?
Then rang the war-shout—who hath gained the strife?

^c None of the British ships returned a gun till they had taken their several stations close alongside of the enemy's vessels.

Unhappy Brueys ! Oh, might valour save,
France had not wept above thine honour'd grave ;
Thy memory had not wreath'd one circlet more
For the rich crown victorious Albion wore !

It might not be. Lo ! through the gloom of night
The ruthless flames wave high their lurid light,
Sport like fell demons through the crackling shrouds,
And mock the fury of yon palsied crowds.
Stay, mortals, stay ! your feeble efforts spare !
A foe more dread, a mightier arm is there ;
In blazing tracery hung from mast to mast,
The wreathed flames their vivid lightnings cast ;
Far o'er the gleaming ocean's crimson'd wave,
Like fabled death-lights pointing to the grave,—
Far o'er the crowds that throng around to gaze,
O'er friends, o'er foemen, streams the mighty blaze ;
Till the vast fabric, leaping from the sea,
Rent with her throes of death-straught agony,
High through the air upheaves her giant frame,
And falls in thousand wrecks—a cataract of flame !^d

^d “ This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful : the firing immediately ceased on both sides ; and the first sound which broke the silence was the dash of her shattered masts and yards falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded.”—*Southey's Life of Nelson*.

The startled Arab heard the distant sound,
And deem'd dread Azrael shook the quaking ground;
Far reach'd the fragments of that deadly shower,
From lone El Rashid^e to Aboukir's tower;
Whilst the scar'd echoes on far Canaan's shore
In fainter cadence murmur'd back the roar—
Wide as the view from Pompey's column'd pile,^f
The towery guardian of the wealthy Nile;
Bright as the flame that erst in prouder days
Stream'd from old Pharos' rock a warder blaze!

By Mizraim's storied shores the ling'ring sun
Gleams o'er the fight, and hails the avenging gun.
God of the East! he marks her threat'ned woes,
And glares red anger on her daring foes:
Nor hid, pale Crescent, be thine amber light;
Thine are the wrongs, and for thy weal the fight.
In motley groups around Canopus' bay
Thy swarthy votaries watch the unwonted fray;
And, half in wonder, half in terror, press
To curse the invader, and his foes to bless.

^e *El Rashid*—Rosetta.

^f Pompey's or Diocletian's pillar. "Elle sert en mer de reconnaissance aux vaisseaux, et guide les Arabes dans les plaines non moins vastes, et nues du desert."—*Histoire d'Egypte. Antiq. Descr.* vol. ii.

There the fierce Mam'luke stays his fiery steed,
Whose god is war, and victory his creed;
O'er the strange sight Arabia's desert child—
The roving Bedouin bends his glances wild:
Though all unskill'd the Giaour's stern fight to read,
How fares Britannia, how the Frenchmen speed;
Whilst fear and wonder dim their aching gaze,
The Mam'luke trembles, and the Arab prays:—

Allah, give ear! O Thou that rul'st the fight,
Rise, God of battles, and defend the right!
Here be Thy terrors once again displayed,
Here with dread portents daunt the renegade!^ε

Joy to fair Egypt! bid new smiles illumine
Her sadden'd brow, and chase Oppression's gloom;
Bid cheering Hope, with nature's lavish hand,
Bless the bright scenes of that enchanted land!
Her green savannahs, soft as evening calm—
Her lotus-beds, and groves of feathery palm—
The emerald verdure that in Goshen grows—
The glistening olive, and the perfum'd rose.

^ε *The renegade.* It seems certain that the Egyptians looked on Napoleon's conversion as mere imposture; and therefore would apply to him all the disgrace of deserting his own religion, without the redeeming virtue of adopting theirs.

Her lowliest spots with gilded memories spread—
Tents of the living—cities of the dead;
Her ancient monuments, whose legends climb
Like ivy tendrils round the trunk of Time;
The giant Pyramids—Eld's mystic pile—
The desert's trackless graves—the life-streams of the
Nile!

But where the victors!—where the exulting cry,
The thrilling shout of conscious victory?
Why are they silent? Nay, be silent thou!
Hush'd be each whisper—hear the seaman's vow!
“Kneel, comrades, kneel! let faithless Gallia mourn;
“Learn that God's scorers are themselves a scorn.
“Be Albion's sons with holier thoughts imbued,
“Their first glad breath be spent in gratitude!
“Not unto us be praise or glory given—
“Not unto us—but to the Lord of Heaven!
“But that His aid was ours, we now may say,
“But that His arm upheld us in the fray,
“We had not stemm'd them in their surging pride:
“Our souls had perish'd 'neath the whelming tide.
“No arm of man, no mortal's boastful sword,
“Wrought this deliverance—'twas Himself, the
Lord!”

Nelson! thou richest gem from glory's mine!
A priceless meed—a nation's thanks are thine;
For thee the grateful chaplet Albion wreath'd,
Thy bright example to her sons bequeath'd:

And still, 'midst waning years, the hallow'd flame
Of patriot ardour kindles at thy name ;
The youthful sailor reads with beaming eye
Thy noble signal—and is bold to die !
E'en now, weak emblem of a nation's love,
Soars thy tall column, England's thanks to prove ;
There thronging crowds shall gaze with hearts of
pride,
Forget their sorrows, fling their cares aside ;
Ages unborn shall read that deathless scroll,
And spurn the ignoble joys of Pleasure's bowl.
When lawless force and factious storms are rife,
Thy name shall calm the bitterness of strife ;
Then shall thy spirit nobler thoughts inspire,
And Nelson's memory wake the patriot fire !

And ye, brave sailors ! were it mine to raise
A minstrel's tribute of Mæonian praise ;
Had I the art from mortal woof to frame
The deathless texture of immortal fame ;
What nobler crown were e'er by minstrel wove ?
What boon more precious than your country's love ?
For ye are Albion's chosen, Ocean's pride,
The cherish'd pledges of his island bride !
There were ye nurtur'd, where her warder rock
Stems the rude wave, and bides the tempest's shock ;
Where the hoarse shingle grates beneath the tide,
And screaming storm-birds on the surges ride.

There first th' impatient urchin learnt to steer
His rude-built vessel, and forgot to fear;
There Nelson learnt to spurn his idler home,
And the wild water's denizen to roam.
There from the village manse^h the brave boy flew,
The tide, the boats, the distant sails to view;
Whilst—home, its friends, its pleasures all forgot—
Wild Nature school'd him for his future lot;
And taught, amidst the bluff winds' rude embrace,
That ocean-love no hardships may efface.

Caught with such love the veteran rears his head,
The fearless youngster pants the deck to tread;
So Britain's sons, the high, the lowly feel
One heartfelt sympathy with seamen's zeal;
So he, the Poet, though untaught to glow
With that stern rapture warriors only know,
O'er his lone task, yet felt the generous pride,
Whilst fancy bore him to the hero's side,
And patriot ardour nerv'd his soul to write
The glorious story of Aboukir's fight.
Death! thou canst ne'er set seal to nobler fame,
Whilst sadden'd memory whispers Southey's name;
And tells how 'midst the praises o'er him sped,
Whilst bloodless laurels wreath'd his honour'd head,

^h Nelson's father was rector of the village of Burnham, on the Norfolk coast.

'Twas his to seize on Learning's magic store,
From Wisdom's quarry dig the priceless ore,
By worth and virtue win to glory's goal,
And to his country consecrate the whole!

Years have roll'd by, and hoary Time hath cast
His deep'ning shadows o'er the mighty Past;
They whose high actions shook the startled world,
Whose arm wrought vengeance, or destruction hurl'd—
Victors and vanquish'd—dastard hearts that fled—
Brave souls that fought—survivors and the dead—
Like footsteps blotted from the faithless shore,
The grave hath claimed them, and their fights are o'er.

The world rolls on—yet Time itself shall fail
Ere grateful England wearies of the tale;
For not in vain her gallant heroes bled,ⁱ
No fruitless laurels twine the victor's head.
Bear witness, Europe! for 'twas thine to feel
How sharp the scourge, how slow the wounds to heal.
Bear witness, Asia! but for Nelson's aid
Thy proudest crowns had graced the renegade,
Chiefs had been fain their suppliant gifts to bring,
And Gallia's citizen been Salem's king.

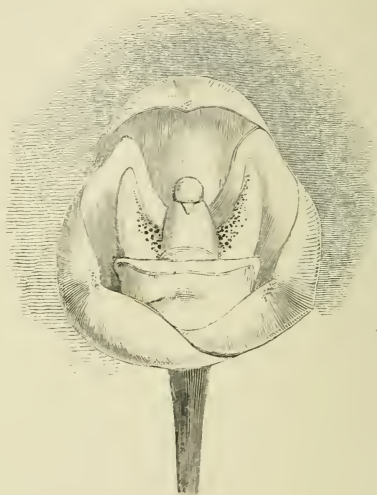
ⁱ For the vast projects Napoleon had in view in his expedition to Egypt, and which were frustrated by the loss of his fleet, consult Bourrienne.

Witness, fair Ind! If Britain's care can bless
Thine abject sons, in number numberless,
Can bid them pierce Oppression's hopeless gloom,
And Superstition grovelling to the tomb;
Can tell of Heaven, of Life beyond the grave,
Can rear the Cross, and preach its power to save—
Then lift thy voice, then wreath the grateful smile,
And bless the names of Nelson and the Nile!

PETRA,

AND OTHER POEMS.





The Peristeria Alata...

P E T R A,

A POEM.

S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

TO WHICH A FEW SHORT POEMS
ARE NOW ADDED.

BY

JOHN WILLIAM BURGON, B.A. (1813-1888)

OF WORCESTER COLLEGE.

Πάνυ δὴ ΔΕΙ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

ARISTOPHANES.

OXFORD:

F. MACPHERSON.

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TO

DAWSON TURNER, ESQ., M. A.,

L.L.D., F.R., A., & L.S., ETC.

OF GREAT YARMOUTH,

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF MUCH PERSONAL KINDNESS,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS VERY GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

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P R E F A C E.

A Second Edition of PETRA has been called for; and the writer avails himself of the opportunity to make several corrections, chiefly verbal, throughout. It has not been thought necessary to repeat on the title-page that it was "a Prize Poem, recited in the Theatre, Oxford, June 4, 1845;" but the circumstance, however unimportant, may be allowed to find a record here.

A few short Poems, written at different periods, but now printed for the first time, are subjoined. The favour which PETRA has enjoyed, suggests the hope that these trifles, which have hitherto appealed only in manuscript to the sympathies of private friends, may not be thought unworthy the perusal of a larger circle.

WORCESTER COLLEGE,
FEB., 1846.

PETRA,—

THE capital of that portion of Arabia which is thence called Petraea,—occupies a mountain-hollow in the rocky region known to the readers of Scripture by the name of SEIR; a territory which extends from the north-eastern extremity of the Arabian gulph to the south of the Dead Sea; and which the Almighty assigned to the Edomites, or the descendants of Esau. It is twice mentioned in the Bible by the equivalent Hebrew name SELAH, or *the Rock*: and thenceforward, (namely, from the seventh or eighth century before our æra,) it obtains no further notice for four hundred years. During this interval, the Nabathæans, or descendants of Nebaioth, the eldest son of Ishmael, had expelled the Edomites from their ancient stronghold, and driven them northward; where their territory was recognised for a few centuries under the Hellenized name of Idumæa. Then it was that one portion of the prophecy concerning the descendants of Esau obtained its fulfilment: they faded from the world's eye, and ceased to be a nation.

Petraea, henceforth part of the Nabathæan territory, became a Roman province; and PETRA, as some ancient historians relate, and as its astonishing ruins abundantly

testify, continued to be its wealthy and flourishing capital. It obtains some slight Ecclesiastical notice so late as the sixth century: but from that time it suddenly disappears from the page of history; and the doom pronounced on the land of the Edomites was entirely accomplished. PETRA had continued wholly unknown for twelve hundred years, when the adventurous Burckhardt discovered its ruins in 1812.

Some valuable and interesting notices of this wonderful city and the surrounding region, are found in the second volume of Dr. Robinson's Biblical Researches; but the pencil of Roberts has told the story of the present state of Edom better than any pen.

ARGUMENT.

SACRED associations allow us to regard the land of Edom almost as the birth-place of song.—In the desolation with which it has been visited, Petra has shared largely.—Enviably feelings of the Traveller who discovered its forgotten site.—The magnificent scenery around Petra,—recalling the miracle of the Exode.—Wonderful approach to the city.—Meditation on its beautiful ruins.—The grandeur—gaiety (suggested by the remains of a theatre)—and flourishing condition of Petra in the time of the Romans,—from which, in common with the rest of the cities of Edom, it fell by some awful, but unrecorded, visitation.—The early and later state of the surrounding country contrasted.—Its present barrenness exhibits the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning it; denounced chiefly in consequence of the hostility of the Edomites against the children of Israel.

The Poem concludes by contrasting the hopeless desolation of Edom and the extinction of Esau's descendants, with the prospects of the Holy Land, and the glorious promises in store for the posterity of Jacob.

“THE PRIDE OF THINE HEART HATH DECEIVED THEE, THOU
THAT DWELLEST IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK, WHOSE HABITATION
IS HIGH; THAT SAITH IN HIS HEART, WHO SHALL
BRING ME DOWN TO THE GROUND?

“THOUGH THOU EXALT THYSELF AS THE EAGLE, AND
THOUGH THOU SET THY NEST AMONG THE STARS, THENCE
WILL I BRING THEE DOWN, SAITH THE LORD.”

OBADIAH.

P e t r a.

SPIRIT of Song! that oft at dewy eve,
When Elfin sprites their frolic dances weave,
Meetest the poet as he walks unseen
The twilight valley, or the dusky green;—
Or by some mountain lake's romantic brim
Wakest the drowsy echoes, all for him;—
And many a time art well content to stray
Where garden-alleys quench the blaze of day,
And small birds sing, and bubbling fountains play; }
Know'st thou the land—a land of giant mould—
By Heav'n assign'd to Edom's race of old^a?

^a“I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.” Deut. ii. 5.

Where rocks on rocks—on mountains mountains pil'd—
 Have form'd a scene so wondrous and so wild,
 That gazing there man seems to gaze upon
 The rough rude ocean frozen into stone ?
 Full well thou know'st ! for sure, when Israel wound
 His homeward journey o'er that hallow'd ground,—
 Forc'd in the depths of those wild hills to wait,
 And kneel, a suppliant, at his brother's gate,—
 While burning anthems rose from many a tongue,
 Not coldly mute the harp of Judah hung !
 And did not one, in yet remoter time,
 Wake there the 'birth-notes of the holy chime ?'
 Doth not to Edom's rugged land belong
 The man of Uz—the Morning-star of song^b !

Yea, and to Fancy's ear, o'er rock and hill
 More solemn harpings there are floating still.
 Harps that long since have been attun'd above
 To hymns of joy, and seraph-lays of love,
 In awful strains from many a trembling wire
 Have pour'd o'er Edom words of deepest ire !

^b Job i. 1.—The date commonly assigned to this Book, the most ancient in the world, is B. C. 1520.—The land where Job dwelt, (which seems to have derived its name from Uz, the grandson of Shem, Gen. x. 23.) is identified with Edom by the prophet Jeremiah, Lament. iv. 21.

Words that yet live and burn—in whose keen ray }
 The light and life of Edom ebb'd away : }
 Still fading, star-like, from the blaze of day^c!
 And thou too, Petra, tho' the Roman came
 And fann'd thy dying glories into flame ;
 Rear'd the tall column—spread the stately dome—
 And seem'd the founder of a second Rome,—
 How brief the pageant^d! On thy dying brow
 Men laid a crown—but who shall crown thee now?
 A thousand summers o'er thy ruins crept :
 A thousand winters o'er thy ruins wept :
 A thousand years—and still the very spot
 Where once thou wert so glorious, was forgot !

What joy was his—the wandering man, who first
 Dissolv'd the spell !—on whom the Vision burst
 Of that enchanted City, as it lay
 Bath'd in the splendours of a Syrian day.
 O Fancy, thou that must so oft have shed
 Dreams of its beauty round his sleeping head ;
 Woke in his heart the wild-bird's wish to roam,
 And told of marvels in that mountain-home ;

^c The prophecies concerning Edom, in fulness and minuteness, are second only to those concerning the chosen people of GOD.

^d “Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of Hosts, *They shall build, but I will throw down.*” Malachi i. 4.

Still be it thine with angel-hand to guide
 These longing footsteps by that Trav'ler's side!
 Waft o'er mine ear one echo of the strain
 Which dark-ey'd Kedar pours along the plain;
 Or let one gaze, how brief soe'er, inspire
 These falt'ring lips to glow with Eastern fire!

Sudden,—around me, rocks and cliffs arise;
 The earth their footstool, and their crown the skies:
 Some—soaring steep,—as if to curtain round
 From mortal gaze each nook of holy ground:
 Some—prostrate hurl'd,—as if by that fierce storm
 Which rent the mountains, when th' Almighty form
 'Rose up from Seir;' and trembling Sinai saw
 His thousand Saints dispense His fiery law^e.
 And one there is which, beetling o'er the rest,
 Pillows a Prophet on its rocky crest^f:

* The scene of terrific splendour which attended the delivery of the Law, so dimly hinted at in the Book of Exodus, is partly disclosed in later portions of the Bible. Thus in Deuteronomy, (xxxiii. 2;) "The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Compare Ps. lxxviii. 17, and the references to the New Testament in the margin. See also the seventh and eighth verses of the same Psalm; which seem a quotation from the Song of Deborah and Barak.

^f "And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped

Uplifted high—where none but stars may keep
 Their bright-ey'd vigils round his saintly sleep :
 Or rushing winds from Pisgah's kindred height
 Pour a wild requiem through the noon of night.
 Fit scene for marvels ! In such land should none
 But giants move, and giant deeds be done.
 O'er such huge hills might fitly seem to stray
 A ransom'd people on their homeward way.
 In such wild valleys, round their ark rever'd,
 At set of sun their myriad tents be rear'd.
 Myriads ! and yet, above them and around,
 Such giant features of the landscape frown'd,
 They seem'd no more—that people and their guide—
 Than Jethro's flock on Horeb's hallow'd side !

Ah say, ere gather'd in their destin'd fold,
 While Israel wander'd o'er this waste of old ;
 As, eve by eve, upon these mountains brown,
 Silent as snow the heavenly bread came down ;—
 From the cleft rock as gush'd the sparkling wave
 To cheer their sinking spirits, and to save ;—
 And the bright pillar, through the livelong night,
 Shed o'er their tents its soft celestial light ;—

Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son ; and Aaron died there in the top of the Mount." Numb. xx. 27, 28.

Did none perchance of Judah's faithful line
 Read the high teaching of each heav'n-sent sign^g?
 Say—while around him others pin'd forlorn
 For Canaan's valleys 'standing thick with corn'—
 Did no fond heart, with nobler instinct fraught,
 Sigh for the substance which those shadows taught?
 On trembling pinions seek to soar above,
 Refin'd by sorrow, and sublim'd by love,—
 Till Faith discern'd what Reason dimly scann'd,
 And Hope gave promise of the better Land?

Still on for Petra,—till the desert wide
 Shrinks to a valley; and on either side
 The rude rock springeth, and a long array
 Of tombs, forgotten, sadden all the way^h.
 Then the earth yawns, terrific: and a path,
 By Nature fram'd in waywardness or wrath,
 Winds where two rocks precipitously frown,—
 The giant warders of that wondrous townⁱ!

^g The spiritual intent of both Sacraments was clearly set forth by Moses in the wilderness. Deut. viii. 3, and x. 16.

^h "The valley contracts more and more, and the cliffs become higher, presenting on each side a street of tombs Here is the opening of the terrific chasm, which anciently formed the only avenue to the city on this side." Robinson, ii. p. 515, 516.

ⁱ "The rocks are all of reddish sand-stone, perpendicular on both sides; and in some places they overhang the passage, so as almost to

Day comes not here,—or in such spectral guise,
 She seems an outcast from yon happy skies.
 In silent awe the Arab steals along,
 Nor cheers his camels with their wonted song.
 Well may the spirit, left alone to brood
 On the dim shapes which haunt that solitude,
 O'erflow with joy—that dreary pathway past—
 When Petra bursts upon the gaze at last.

O passing beautiful—in this wild spot
 Temples, and tombs, and dwellings,—all forgot!
 One sea of sunlight far around them spread,
 And skies of sapphire mantling overhead.
 They seem no work of man's creative hand,
 Where Labour wrought as wayward Fancy plann'd;
 But from the rock as if by magic grown,
 Eternal—silent—beautiful—alone!
 Not virgin white—like that old Doric shrine^k
 Where once Athena held her rites divine:
 Not saintly grey—like many a minster fane

shut out the light of the sky.... Indeed the whole vast mass of rock seems as if originally rent asunder by some great convulsion of nature, leaving behind this long, narrow, winding, magnificent chasm." *Ibid.* p. 516.

^k The Parthenon was constructed of the marble from Mount Pentelicus,—“admitting as fine a surface, and presenting as beautiful a colour, as ivory.” Leake's *Athens*, i. p. 334.

That crowns the hill, or sanctifies the plain :
 But rosy-red^l,—as if the blush of dawn
 Which first beheld them were not yet withdrawn :
 The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,
 Which men call'd old two thousand years ago !
 Match me such marvel, save in Eastern clime,—
 A rose-red city—‘ half as old as Time !’

And this is Petra—this the lofty boast
 Of Edom's once unconquerable coast !
 These the gay halls thro' which, in days of old,
 The tide of life so rapturously roll'd !
 These the proud streets where Wealth, with lavish hand,
 Pour'd the rich spoils of ev'ry Orient land ;
 All that the seaman's timid barque beguiles,
 To Cush and Ophir, ‘ Tarshish and the Isles :’
 Afric's red gold,—Arabia's spicy store,—
 And pearl and plume from India's furthest shore^m !

^l “ Not the least remarkable circumstance in the peculiarities of this singular spot, is the colour of the rocks. They present not a dead mass of dull monotonous red ; but an endless variety of bright and living hues, from the deepest crimson to the softest pink.” Robinson, ii. 531. Irby and Mangles, and Laborde, repeatedly notice the singular effect of the “ rose-coloured granite” of Petra.

^m “ The inhabitants of this region had early become extremely engaged in commerce, as the carriers of the rich products of the East between the Red Sea and the ports of the Phenicians. In the first expedition sent by Antigonos, the men of Petra were absent at a mart, and Athenæus found in Petra a large quantity of frankincense and myrrh,

How chang'd—how fallen ! All her glory fled,
 The widow'd cityⁿ mourns her many dead.
 Like some fond heart which gaunt Disease hath left
 Of all it liv'd for—all it lov'd, bereft ;
 Mute in its anguish ! struck with pangs too deep
 For words to utter, or for tears to weep.

Yet hearts and eyes there be, well skill'd to trace,
 The living features in the lifeless face,
 For whom that silent desert air seems rife
 With tuneful voices and the pulse of life.
 For them sweeps by in glitt'ring pomp again
 The warlike pageant and the peaceful train :
 For them bright shadows fill these vacant halls,
 And Beauty wakes where'er their footstep falls.
 "Heard ye it not?"—the bright-ey'd dreamer cries,—
 "Heard ye no shout from yonder seats arise^o?"

and five hundred talents of silver. Strabo relates that the merchandise of India and Arabia was transported on camels from Leuce Kome to Petra, and thence to Rhinocolura, and other places. Under the Romans this trade appears to have become still more prosperous," &c. Robinson, ii. 561, 562.

ⁿ On the coins of Petra, the city is represented as a veiled and turreted female sitting on a rock. Cf. Jeremiah, Lament. i. 1.

^o One of the first objects which arrests the eye of the traveller, on emerging from the terrific defile which forms the approach to Petra, is a "theatre, wholly hewn out of the live rock. . . . The cliffs on each side are full of tombs; while in front, along the face of the eastern cliffs, the eye of the spectator rests on a multitude of the largest and most splendid

(And his rapt gaze in ecstasy is bent
 On what seems Pleasure's mournful monument.)
 "Ye deem the actor and his mimic rage
 "Pass'd like a shadow from yon ruin'd stage;
 "But to mine eye he lives and moves:—'tis *we*
 "Are shadows here—the substance only he!
 "Or do I dream?—they come and fade so fast—
 "Now here, now there,—now present, and now past.
 "But now, a stern old King^p,—whom anguish strong
 "Had goaded into madness,—stalk'd along,
 "Sightless and crownless: . . . now, a Maiden^q stands
 "Ev'n where he stood; and in her lily hands
 "Enfolds an urn: ineffable the grace,—
 "The marble sorrow of that classic face!
 "It fades—'tis fled! . . . and on a lofty car
 "There sits another^r: like some baleful star
 "Glares her wild eye^s;—and from her lips of ire

sepulchres. Strange contrast! where a taste for the frivolities of the day, was at the same time gratified by the magnificence of tombs; amusement in a cemetery; a theatre in the midst of sepulchres." Robinson, ii. p. 521, 522.

^p Œdipus.—See the Œd. Tyr. v. 1307, and following verses.

^q Electra.—See the passage beginning ᾧ φιλτάτου μνημεῖον ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί. Soph. El. 1126.

^r Cassandra.—Æsch. Ag. 1039. 1054.

^s Ibid. 1063. τρόπος δὲ θηρὺς ὡς νεαιρέτου.

“ Streams a full torrent of prophetic fire^t.

“ She raves,—she rises,—and with frenzied hand

“ Dashes to earth her garland and her wand^u. . . .

“ Sublimely beautiful! When this is o’er

“ Let nothing follow.—I will gaze no more!”

And did ye thus, ye men of Petra,—say,
Thus did ye while the listless hours away?

Tho’ ev’ry cliff, tho’ ev’ry crag around,

With graves on graves innumerable frown’d,—

Thus could ye sit, contented with a toy,

And lapt in dreams of unsubstantial joy?

Light-hearted race! o’er them it flung no gloom

That Echo answer’d from a kinsman’s tomb.

Bred in these mountain valleys, those dark eyes,

Fierce as their summer,—cloudless as their skies,—

Belov’d and loving,—blest and blessing,—here

Made friends with Death throughout the livelong year^v:

^t Ibid. 1215. ἵπ’ αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος | στροβεῖ, ταρασσὼν φροϊμίους ἐφημίους, κ. τ. λ.

^u ἵτ’ ἐς φθόρον πεσόντ’. See *ibid.* 1264—1270.

^v “ In looking at the wonders of this ancient city, one is at a loss whether most to admire the wildness of the position and natural scenery, or the taste and skill with which it was fashioned into a secure retreat, and adorned with splendid structures,—chiefly for the dead. The most striking feature of the place consists, not in the fact that there are occasional excavations and sculptures like those above described; but in the innumerable multitude of such excavations, along the whole extent

And hop'd, perchance, when Life's gay round was o'er,
 And joy and sorrow sway'd their hearts no more,
 Their faithful souls, unfetter'd, yet might dwell
 Amid the haunts they lov'd in life so well!

And Petra thus had rear'd another race
 In turn to revel in her 'pride of place :'
 Thus the old eagles of imperial Rome
 Seem'd on her hills to find a second home :
 And Roman arts with Roman arms arose,
 To blot the mem'ry of her former foes.
 Tho' Edom's line, by Ishmael's^{*} sword oppress'd,
 Had long been exil'd from their rock-built nest,
 On Edom's rugged hills, as loath to set,
 The sun of bygone summers linger'd yet :
 And men forgot,—or deem'd an idle tale,—
 The words of doom that hung o'er Petra's vale.
 It could not be!—that old portentous chime
 So long had slumber'd by the shores of Time,

of perpendicular rocks adjacent to the main area, and in all the lateral valleys and chasms ; the entrances of very many of which are variously, richly, and often fantastically decorated, with every imaginable order and style of architecture." Robinson, ii. 529, 530. " Indeed throughout almost every quarter of this metropolis, the depositories of the dead must have presented themselves constantly to the eyes of the inhabitants, and have almost outnumbered the habitations of the living." Irby and Mangles (quoted by Laborde.)

^{*} See the Advertisement prefixed to the Poem.

Why heed it now? why talk of gloom to-day,
When Heav'n is blue, and Earth so green and gay?

So spake the men of old; and ev'ry heart
To festive revel, or to crowded mart,
Flew for its joy,—not oft'nèr sought than found,—
So gaily there the circling hours went round!
And nurs'd were they in Luxury—and knew
The spot of earth where ev'ry pleasure grew.
Their fountains flung their waters to the skies:
Their groves lay steep'd in hues of Paradise^γ:
Here rose the gorgeous sepulchre, and there
Some fairy palace hung its roof in air:
While climes remote each costly gift supplied,
(For ships of Petra swam on ev'ry tide;)
And all the East, in conscious splendour, roll'd
At Petra's feet her jewels and her gold^z.

O that her rocks had language! and might tell
In what wild shape the storm of vengeance fell^a.

^γ Τὰ μὲν ἔκτος (says Strabo, speaking of Petra) κρημνοῦ ἀποτόμου, τὰ δ' ἐντὸς πηγὰς ἀφθόνοους ἔχοντος εἰς τε ὕδρεϊαν καὶ κηπέϊαν. xvi. 4. 21. (quoted by Robinson.)

^z A friend has pointed out to me the following passage in the Christian Year, which I must have unconsciously imitated in this couplet:—

The orphan'd realm threw wide her gates, and told
Into freed Israel's lap her jewels and her gold.

See Robinson, ii. 575, 576.

Swift—sweeping—sudden—whensoever it came ;
 Blighting and blasting,—like the breath of flame.
 One piercing cry,—one agonizing wail,—
 One voice from Edom's cities told the tale :
 One cry of bitterness,—and all was o'er !
 But the far echo smote the Red-Sea shore^b;
 And peal'd along its waters—till the waves
 Made hollow answer from their coral caves^c !

How chang'd, O Edom, since that hour, the scene
 From what the morning of thy days had been !
 When many a valley rich with corn and wine,
 When streams of Earth, and dews of Heav'n were thine ;
 And flocks and herds—a patriarch's ample store—
 Till all thy cup with plenteousness ran o'er^d.
 Then Faith^e with thee her sacred mansion made ;
 And holy lips, within thy summer shade,

^b “Hear the counsel of the LORD that He hath taken against Edom The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry, *the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea.*” Jer. xlix. 20, 21.

^c An Italian traveller relates of his voyage on the Red Sea, “that the weather was so calm, and the water so transparent, that he amused himself by observing the peculiarity of the depths beneath him; where weeds and corals grow to such a size, and so disposed, as almost to have the appearance of groves and gardens.”

^d The terms of Esau's blessing (Gen. xxvii. 39.) well agree with what we read of the pastoral wealth of Job. (Job i. 3.) See also the evidence of a similar kind afforded by Numb. xx. 17: but “He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.”

^e Job xix. 25—27.

Of bright Arcturus and Orion told;—
 And the sweet sway the wand'ring Pleiads hold^f;—
 And of the matin hymn which burst sublime
 From all creation at the birth of Time;
 When 'Earth self-balanc'd on its centre hung,'
 And 'all the morning stars' like seraphs sung^g. . . .
 Such were the themes thy children lov'd to hear
 When first they dwelt along the vales of Seir:
 While youths and maids from each romantic town
 Went forth in dances when the sun went down;
 And antique tale, and legendary song,
 And harp and timbrel^h made the night less long.

But who are theseⁱ that kneel in lowly state,
 And plead for love at Petra's haughty gate;
 That urge by each endearing claim their prayer?—
 Thy kindred, Edom,—the redeem'd are there!

^f "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" Job xxxviii. 31, 32. See also ix. 9.

^g Job xxxviii. 7.

^h "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." Job xxi. 11, 12.

ⁱ See the account of the application made by Moses for leave to conduct the Israelites, after their forty years' wandering in the desert, across the mountains of Edom, which was the shortest road towards the Land of Promise. Numb. xx. 14—21.

Scan well that brow,—and dost thou mark no line,
 No stamp of feature that resembles thine?
 Does nought recall an old ancestral tale :—
 Two brothers bred in Hebron's happy vale ;—
 Far Mamre's oak—where blaz'd their altar fires ;—
 And Mamre's cave—where sleep your common sires
 Or if such plea, all cruel as thou art !
 Can wake no softness in thy savage heart,
 Yet feel for these—the youthful and the fair,
 The weary mother, and her fainting care !
 Yea, feel for all,—the mighty orphan host^k,
 Which GOD, in love, hath guided to thy coast ;—
 Borne up on eagles' wings,—and fondly fed
 With angels' food,—and through the desert led
 By cloud and flame ;—and now, their wand'rings o'er,
 Speeds on their way to Canaan's quiet shore.—
 But what spake Edom? Taunting words of ill,—
 And that keen knife,—a brother's threat to kill !

^k It can scarcely be necessary to suggest in illustration of the preceding verses the history of Isaac's two sons:—Mamre, (or Hebron) where Abraham "built an altar to the LORD" (Gen. xiii. 18), (Who visited him there with two angels, on the mysterious occasion when the patriarch "stood by them under the tree and they did eat,") and where he himself resided; and after him, Isaac, (and Jacob too:)—the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah were buried, and where Esau and Jacob buried their father Isaac:—and the circumstance that all but two of

Of all the past no image fill'd his eye
 But Jacob's blessing—Esau's bitter cry :—
 He bar'd his sword !—On that unnatural day
 A curse came down when Israel turn'd away.

Years sped their course : the fierce Chaldean came,
 And Salem's walls were wrapt in robes of flame :
 Fair Sion's height with carnage all o'erspread ;
 Her temple fallen, and its glory fled :
 And *thou* wert there ! with unrelenting brow
 The first to slay—the first to triumph, thou¹ !
 Foremost to hurl the blazing brand^m, and fill
 The festive cup on Sion's holy hillⁿ !
 Could none be found but thee ? Could wrath divine
 Be dealt on Judah by no hand but thine ?

those who entered the Land of Promise had lost their parents in the wilderness.

¹ “ For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever . . . In the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger ; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction ; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress . . . Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape,” &c. Obad. ver. 10—14.

^m “ The Temple which the Edomites burned when Judæa was made desolate by the Chaldees.” 1 Esd. iv. 45.

ⁿ “ As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee . . . for as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall,” &c. Obad. ver. 15, 16.

"Remember, LORD,"—the mournful captives cried,
 As sad they wept by Babel's willowy side°,—
 "O LORD, remember in that hour of woe,
 How taunting Edom prov'd our fiercest foe!"
 And that poor plaint, to Heav'n's high throne upborne,
 Tho' all that heard it curl'd the lip with scorn,
 Call'd down the wrath which spake from many a lyre
 In strains that blasted like the breath of fire :
 And the wild winds the accents swept along,
 Till Edom's cliffs re-echoed to the song.

On cold high hearts at first that warning fell,
 For Edom held his wind-rock'd citadel :
 From Petra's cliff look'd forth in impious pride,
 And Sion's wrath and Sion's GOD defied.
 Then spake a Voice—"Altho' thou build thy nest
 High as the stars;—and on the mountain's breast
 Sitt'st brooding like the eagle;—yet my frown
 Shall hurl thy glory and thy greatness down^p:

° "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Sion. We hanged our harps upon the willows Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." Psalm cxxxvii. 1, 2, 7.

^p See Jer. xlix. 16, and the quotation from the prophecy of Obadiah prefixed to the poem.

Yea, when all earth rejoiceth, there shall be
A desolation and a curse on thee^q!”

Go, mark her well—and lies she not forlorn?
The stranger's wonder, and the heathen's scorn^r!
Her royal roofs with nettles all o'ergrown^s;—
Her many towns a wilderness of stone^t;—
And save where swims the eagle high in air^u,
No sound of life—no pulse of motion there^x!
There springs no verdure in her pathless vales^y:
The river flows not, and the fountain fails:
She keeps no feature of her ancient face:
There breathes not one of Esau's royal race^z:

^q “Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.” Ezek. xxxv. 14.

^r “For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men.” Jer. xlix. 15.—Not to overload the page with quotations, it may suffice to state that the accounts of modern travellers shew that the prophecies concerning Edom have all met with the most extraordinary literal fulfilment.

^s “And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof.” Isa. xxxiv. 13.

^t “He shall stretch out upon it the stones of emptiness.” Isa. xxxiv. 11.

^u “The owl also and the raven shall dwell in it.” Isa. xxxiv. 11.—Eagles, hawks, and owls are the only living creatures Irby and Mangles found at Petra.

^x “I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return.” Ezek. xxxv. 9. “From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.” Isa. xxxiv. 10.

^y “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee; and I will make thee most desolate O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; and they shall know that I am the LORD.” Ezek. xxxv. 3—15.

^z “There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.” Obad. ver. 18.

And while yon stars in tuneful circles roll,—
 While Summer cheers, and Winter chills the pole,—
 While Night and Day in soft succession shine^a,—
 So long shall Edom own her doom divine :
 Attest His truth, Who spake the word of old,
 And stand, a sign for ages to behold :
 A wreck thrown up on Time's deserted shore,—
 A blight—a blank—a curse for evermore !

Daughter of Sion^b—fallen as thou art,
 Far other strains address thy sorrowing heart !
 Tho' bare thy mountains, and thy vales forlorn,
 Unblest by culture, yield thee briar and thorn,—
 Yet shall thy wilderness break forth and sing^c;
 The myrtle smile,—the graceful cedar spring^d ;—

^a Cf. Gen. viii. 22, and Jer. xxxiii. 20 and 25.

^b As the sacred narrative of the fortunes of GOD's chosen people begins by setting before us the hostility of Esau and Jacob; and at intervals, as if incidentally, reminds us of that continued and ever-widening breach; so the prophetic canon, when it is drawing towards a close, constantly brings before us, and sets in awful contrast, the ulterior destiny of Edom and Israel (e. g. Ezek. xxxv. and xxxvi: Joel iii. 19—21: Obad. ver. 1—16. and ver. 17—21.) The writer judged he could not more fitly conclude his verses than by exhibiting this contrast, in terms borrowed from prophecy.

^c "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Is. lv. 12.

^d "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." Is. lv. 13. "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar. . . and the myrtle; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together." Is. xli. 19.

Life-giving streams thy barren rock disclose^e,
 And all the desert 'blossom like the rose'^f!
 Thy scatter'd sons, tho' now they wander wide,
 Shall yet be gather'd to thy longing side^g;
 And all Ezekiel's solemn vision be^h
 A type of faithful Love fulfill'd in thee.
 Yea, tho' rude hands have spoil'd fair Salem's tow'rs;
 Tho' steps profane have press'd her hallow'd bow'rs;
 Tho' 'Siloa's brook' no longer softly flows
 Fast by the hill where once her glory roseⁱ;
 Yet fear not thou! the voice of Love divine
 Still cries—"Awaken thee!" "Arise, and shine^k!"
 'There is a river' which shall yet make blest
 Thy heav'nly home, the city of thy rest.
 That holy City, seen by prophet eyes^l,

^e "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." Is. xli. 18.

^f "And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose." Is. xxxv. 1.

^g "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." Is. lx. 4.

^h Ezekiel xxxvii. 1—14.

ⁱ Isaiah viii. 6.—Dr. Robinson mentions that there was no water in the reservoir of Siloam, when he visited Jerusalem.

^k "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Sion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Is. lii. 1. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Is. lx. 1.

^l "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from

Waits but the signal that shall rend the skies,
 And thou shalt all the glorious sight behold^m,—
 The walls of jasper, and the streets of gold :
 The twelve bright Angels, eager to unfurl
 The twelve broad gates,—and ev'ry gate a pearlⁿ!
 The Tree of Life beside the crystal wave,
 With 'leaves to heal the nations,' and to save^o :
 And HIM reveal'd Whom thou so dimly knew,—
 The LAMB,—thy Sacrifice and Temple too ;
 Whom Seraphs veil their faces when they sing^p,—
 Thine own Thrice-holy Prophet, Priest, and King ! . . .

GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. xxi. 2.

^m "And there came unto me one of the seven Angels . . . and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from GOD, having the glory of GOD : and her light was like unto a stone most precious." Rev. xxi. 9—11.

ⁿ It "had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve Angels . . . and the building of the wall of it was of jasper . . . and the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl : and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass . . . And the gates of it shall not be shut at all." Rev. xxi. 12, 18, 21, 25.

^o "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb . . . and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

^p "And I saw no temple therein : for the LORD GOD Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Rev. xxi. 22. "I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up . . . Above it stood the Seraphims : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face . . . and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy." Is. vi. 1—3.

And there no Sun shall daily need to rise :
And there no Moon shall nightly sail the skies :
What need of sun by day, or moon by night ?
The LORD thy glory, and the LAMB thy light^a !
Thy portion there, where Time itself shall be
One long, long rest—one sabbath-day to thee !

^a “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Rev. xxi. 23.

The Saint's-Day Sermon.

SUGGESTED BY A SERMON AT THE PAROCHIAL SERVICE IN

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, 28TH OCT. 1842.

1.

Grey saintly Towers scatter'd o'er the land
 By hands in Heav'n remember'd,—what are they
 But bulwarks strong where FAITH may make her stand?
 And Sanctuaries where CHARITY may pray?
 And turrets high—whence, of a brighter day,
 HOPE may espy the dawning?—All beside
 Of man's invention hasteth to decay:
 But those small Temples stedfastly abide,
 And built upon a rock, defy the 'whelming tide.

2.

But can it aught avail—year after year—
 That one within, in robes of white array'd,
 Should meet a few fond hearts to worship here,
 And pray with them the prayers their fathers pray'd?
 And, soon as he in holy earth is laid,
 That still another should his office take?
 Then spake the lips I lov'd—and what they said
 Went to my heart. O reader, for thy sake,
 I would I could recal the very words they spake!

3.

“Our service is a mystery. We fill
 The place our Master's wisdom once assign'd,
 Nor question *why*—content to know His will:
 Like men on guard—to whom their chieftain's mind
 Is a clasp'd book, for study undesign'd.
 Nor do we ever in His courts inquire
 If few or many be:—our joy we find
 In His sweet service,—and to nought aspire
 But telling forth His praise, tho' empty be the choir.

4.

“ For when, to human eye, no shape is there,
 Deem not the aisle untenanted ! We know
 That Saints and Angels in our homage share ;—
 And shall we not believe that here below
 They share our service ? that the words which flow
 From us in praises, or are lisp’d in pray’rs,
 In some mysterious way reflect the glow,
 And echo back the harmony, of theirs ;
 And so ascend to Heav’n, and grow seraphic airs ?

5.

“ Then deem not he, who feeds his flock afar,
 An empty, formal, fruitless service brings :
 But rather deem of him as of a star
 That soars along with glory on its wings ;
 ‘ And in its orbit like an angel sings.’
 Learn too of him, the louder raves the blast,
 That Faith the closer to her altar clings ;
 To prayer and praise,—to festival and fast ;—
 And silent waits till all the tyranny be past.

6.

“ No craven fear be thine, tho’ man’s poor tongue
Should rail against thee. Wilt thou then refuse
To bear the cross,—whereon thy Master hung?
And be, like Him, insulted? wilt thou choose
The world’s brief Friendship—haply *His* to lose?
Dread only this :—in aught offending One
Who doth of Folly ev’n His Saints accuse.
What *He* forbids,—be *that* thy care to shun :
What He commands, dread thou in aught to leave undone!”

Worcester College,
29th Oct. 1842.

Additional Stanzas.

ADVENT, 1845.

1.

[The voice is hush'd which spake those words to me.
 It is not Death, nor distance ; yet there roll
 What might as well Death's dreary waters be
 Between my spirit and his sever'd soul :
 Sever'd from duty,—sever'd from controul.
 Alas for *him* ! Alas, that one who knew
 So well to urge a brother to the goal,
 Himself should faint,—himself should prove untrue ;
 And take his stand (oh shame !) amid the faithless few !

2.

A still small voice took up the solemn theme,
 And thus went on :] “ Then, as the years roll by,
 Be thou prepar’d for trials sharp ; nor deem
 Thy lot a strange one, if,—perchance to try
 Thy Faith and Love,—there pass before thine eye
 A sight unlook’d for, unsuspected, now ;
 But when it comes—(’twill darken all thy sky !)—
 Nerve thy faint heart,—and fix thy earnest brow,—
 And gird thy feeble limbs,—and oh, be faithful *thou* !

3.

“ What? were it thine (forgive the thought!) to see
 Thine own sweet Mother sinking in distress ;
 Her sons departing ; and none left but thee
 To cheer her poor heart in its loneliness :
 Nay, were some wasting sickness to impress
 On her pale cheek the prelude to decay,—
Then would’st thou love that gentle Mother less ?
 Say,—would’st thou seek her rising plague to stay ;
 Or would’st thou be a wretch,—and turn thyself away ?

4.

“Nay, answer not ;—that tear is thy reply.

Then mark !—thy Mother is Christ’s Church on earth.

She gave thee life,—a life that cannot die ;

She gives thee food,—of which the precious worth

Thou canst not know :—*she* fed thee from thy birth.

Then, from such Mother, let what will betide,

Beware thou shrink not ! Love her, in her dearth

Of loving spirits. Closer to her side

In sorrow, sickness cling ; and she will be thy guide.

5.

“Tell me no specious tale of ‘pure desires,’—

‘Misgivings strong,’ and ‘youthful talents rare,’—

Woe to the Church when boys would teach their sires,

And Rashness sit in Learning’s lofty chair !

Woe to the Church, when novices shall dare

To rend the seamless garment of their LORD !

When they who vow’d, on bended knee, to bear

Their part in ‘building up,’—unsheathe a sword ;

And pierce a hundred hearts, nor think such deed abhorr’d.

6.

"Heav'n keep thee stedfast then! these lessons known;—
 The Church's rights divine, and awful pow'rs:
 Her holy gifts,—her purity,—her own;
 And all her coldness,—all her weakness,—ours!
 Who seek the fruit,—but never rear'd the flow'rs;
 Then start, impatient, from the sad review:
 Nor heed how darkly Heav'n's high forehead low'rs
 On the rash soldier daring to renew
 On his anointed front the sacramental dew!

7.

"And yet,—(for Advent thro' the cold dark air
 Blows a shrill blast of warning, and the Night
 Is well nigh spent,)—do thou and I beware
 Lest the Judge come,—and we, in Love's despite,
 Be found with cruel hands rais'd up to smite
 Our fellow servant!—Many too remain
 On the dark waters, vex'd with weary flight:
 These a kind hand put forth may yet regain,
 And win them back to this,—their storm-tost Ark, again!"

Sonnet.

TO THE FLOWER "PERISTERIA ELATA:" CALLED BY THE
SPANIARDS "ESPIRITU SANTO."

(See the Engraving facing the title-page.)

Exquisite type of that, which lips like ours
 May scarce "express unblam'd!" There sits a dove—
 With brooding wings, and downcast look of love—
 Shrin'd in thy fragrant breast, thou Queen of flowers,
 That doubtless reign'd in Eden's blessed bowers! ...
 Thy petals three—more pure than earthly gem—
 Springing, co-equal, from a single stem,
 Angels might water with ambrosial showers!
 And Man, while gazing on thee, though he knew
 Nought of his Maker's image, might have guess'd
 Enough for Faith to feed on, from the view
 Of what he saw reflected on thy breast.
 O had we ears to hear—and eyes to see—
 And hearts to feel—we might Apostles be!

Houghton Conquest,
 16th July, 1845.

The Month of March.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A FRIEND, (JOHN HIGGINS, ESQ.,
OF TURVEY-ABBEY, BEDFORDSHIRE,) IN PASSION WEEK, 1845;
AND SUGGESTED BY THE COMMON SAYING THAT "MARCH COMES
IN LIKE A LION AND GOES OUT LIKE A LAMB."

1.

"Comes like a Lion—like a Lamb departs,"—
 So said of March our sires; and it may be
 The saying hath some teaching for our hearts,—
 For March is holy^a; and within it, we
 May something find of holy mystery.
 Is it no type of good men's hearts below?
 In life's young spring all lion-like and free,
 They change their nature with their age; and so
 At last to lamb-like port and innocence grow.

^a The Nativity as well as the Passion probably occurred at this season.

2.

"Comes like a lion,"—why, so Moses came :
 A man of war ! and, prompt for vengeance, drew
 His sword against th' Egyptian. Not the same
 When forty years their tranquil shadows threw
 Across his fiery spirit ;—for he grew
 The meekest man beneath Arabia's sky !—
 And *he* was born in March ! and destin'd too
 In March to go forth on his errand high ;
 And, on far Pisgah's height, in March, unseen, to die !

3.

Peter's quick sword—and Paul's misguided zeal—
 What lion-hearts were theirs in life's young day !
 Yet who can read their aged words^b nor feel
 How all that fiercer nature ebb'd away ?
 And Judah's race a pattern stands for aye—
 "A lion's whelp," by dying Jacob styl'd,
 It grew to meekness ere the world grew gray.
 The Baptist bids us in one lowly child
 "Behold the Lamb of God"—most meek when most
 revil'd.

4.

Such my poor song—this cheerless Passion-tide,
 When snows are white on ev'ry neighb'ring hill;
 And winds (*His* ministers) careering wide,
 Each with its several errand to fulfil—
 Stamp on my cheek their salutation chill.
 Would it were worthier! but if one frail line
 Find welcome with ye, not in vain it will
 Have wander'd forth from this fond heart to thine;—
 And oh, that it may knit your Easter thoughts to mine!

^b Compare, for instance, St. Matt. xxvi. 33, 35, "Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended . . . Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,"—with 1 Pet. iii. 15, "Give an answer . . . with meekness and fear," and v. 5, "Be clothed with humility."

*Worcester College,
 Passion-week, 1845.*

A Passage from the Book of Exodus.

No. I.

“AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, STRETCH OUT THINE HAND TOWARD HEAVEN, THAT THERE MAY BE DARKNESS OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT, EVEN DARKNESS WHICH MAY BE FELT....

AND THERE WAS A THICK DARKNESS IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT....

THEY SAW NOT ONE ANOTHER, NEITHER ROSE ANY FROM HIS PLACE FOR THREE DAYS: BUT ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD LIGHT IN THEIR DWELLINGS.”

Exodus x. 21—23.

1.

When Israel dwelt in Egypt's land,

And groan'd beneath the tyrant's pow'r,

O LORD, 'twas Thine Almighty hand

Sustain'd him thro' that dreary hour.

When all the air at noon of day

Was fill'd with gloom “which might be felt,”

Thy smile was still a cheerful ray

In ev'ry tent where Israel dwelt.

2.

And thus, O LORD, the faithful heart
Believes that it will ever be :
Thy love, we know, will ne'er depart
From those who truly trust in Thee.
When all the world grows dark with sin,
With *them* Thy smile will still be found :
Diffusing joy and peace within,
While all seems dark and cheerless round !

London,

12th June, 1838.

A Passage from the Book of Exodus.

No. II.

“AND THE LORD WENT BEFORE THEM BY DAY IN A PILLAR OF A CLOUD, TO LEAD THEM THE WAY; AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE, TO GIVE THEM LIGHT; TO GO BY DAY AND BY NIGHT.

“HE TOOK NOT AWAY THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD BY DAY, NOR THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT, FROM BEFORE THE PEOPLE.”

Exodus xiii. 21, 22.

1.

HE Who with all a Shepherd's^a care
 Led forth His chosen flock of old,—
 (Guiding them safe through ev'ry snare
 Till gather'd in their destin'd fold.)—
 Mov'd on, 'tis said, a cloud by day,
 A glorious shining flame by night;
 Now, shedding gloom along their way,—
 Now, gilding all their path with light.

^a Psalm lxxviii. 52.

2.

And still, O GOD, in sunny hours,

When too much bliss might tempt to ill,

Thy cloud before us darkly low'rs,—

And veil'd, Thou art within it still!

And *who* has ever seen, around,

The light of all he lov'd decay,

Nor then in Thee a sunbeam found

To cheer his steps, and guide his way?

Houghton Conquest,

22nd Aug., 1843.

A Fire-side Fancy.

OFT as, at night, I sit and muse alone,
 Bound by the spell of some enchanting page—
 Bard of old Greece, or half inspir'd sage—
 My kindl'd fancy takes a wayward tone :
 And straight, I hear what seems the midnight moan
 Of some poor restless ghost ;—or, it may be,
 The distant roaring of the sleepless sea ;—
 Or unchain'd winds that howl from zone to zone.
 Hark ! is it not a voice ? There seem'd to come
 A soft sad wail ;—but now, such carol wild
 As a young Mother chaunteth to her child
 Steals o'er the sense.—Go to—it is the hum
 Of a huge city ! while I thus inquire,
 I turn, and find—the kettle near the fire !

Worcester College,
13th Dec., 1844.

Christian Names.

How little meant the names men bore of old !
 Tokens in classic Greece of knightly birth,
 Strength, glory, justice, wisdom, civic worth,
 Or two in one,—was all the tale they told !
 And so in Rome,—what page you will, unfold,
 'Tis still the same : those mighty ones of earth
 Stalk by, suggesting neither grief nor mirth :
 In Caius, Quintus,—canst thou aught behold ?
 But *now*, how chang'd ! each common name brings
 down
 Some thought of Heaven ! John breathes all of love :
 Thomas, though shaded by a SAVIOUR's frown,
 And James, and Peter lift our hearts above :
 And Stephen brings to view a martyr's crown :
 And over Mary broods th' Eternal Dove !

Worcester College,
31st Jan., 1846.

Ruth to Naomi.

INTREAT me not to leave thee in thy woe,
 Or to return from following after thee :
 For where thou goest, I will also go ;
 And where thou lodgest, shall my lodging be.
 Thy people shall my people be, for aye ;
 And *thy* God shall be *my* God, even mine :
 Where'er thou diest, I will also die,
 And lay my bones contentedly with thine.
 The anger of the LORD my portion be
 If any thing but Death part thee and me !

London,
15th Sept., 1840.

L'Enboy.

ADDRESSED TO P. FRASER TYTLER, ESQ.; INTENDED AS THE CONCLUSION
OF A LONG UNFINISHED POEM.

1.

Well,—they who choose may rail at Fortune's frown,
And vow that Life brings slender joys and few;
But while the blessed Sun shines brightly down
On this green earth,—and while the skies are blue,—
And the birds sing,—and flow'rs of brightest hue
Nod their sweet heads in every desert spot,—
I can but feel such railing most untrue:
I cannot think that any are forgot;
Or ever deem my own aught but a blissful lot.

2.

Alas, too prone to underrate the worth
Of unbought joys,—still on, from day to day,
We walk like blind men on our Mother Earth:
We do not prize enough the common ray:
Harmonious shapes, and colours which betray
A more than human Artist;—sights which should
Send the sad heart rejoicing on its way,—
Wake little rapture, and less gratitude,
Tho' He who made them deign'd to call them “very
good.”

3.

A quaint old Garden, seen at dead of night,
 When ev'ry moonlit leaf is lull'd to rest:—
 The crescent Moon when first she steals in sight,
 And hangs like some bright jewel in the west:—
 At sunset, on a lake's unruff'd breast,
 A single Star reflected:—Tow'r and Tree
 Darkly against the evening sky express'd,
 What time the bat is flitting noiselessly,—
 All these are common sights;—and yet, how dear to me!

4.

And so, to wake at Morning's fragrant hour
 And hear the mower whet his scythe:—in June,
 The sweet-voic'd Cuckoo from some leafy bow'r
 Breathing his soft clear note:—a fav'rite tune
 Heard when expected least, and hush'd too soon!
 The sound of Sabbath bells upon the breeze:
 A Fountain bubbling in the blaze of noon:
 The Wind that wails at night among the trees:—
 All these are common sounds;—and yet, how sweet are
 these!

5.

And dear to me the Owl's shrill tremulous cry :—
 The Rooks debating when the day is o'er,
 And stars are slowly gathering in the sky^c :—
 A Blackbird's evening-hymn :—the sullen roar
 Of Ocean chafing on the pebbled shore :—
 To drowsy ear the pattering sound of rain^d :—
 The laugh of little children at my door :—
 A dying anthem's last seraphic strain :—
 Oh, cold this heart must grow ere these shall plead in vain!

6.

And bold am I to vaunt these joys to thee,
 Friend of my heart !—for unto thee I know
 The simplest joys the dearest still to be !
 Thou, in thy study, when the red flames throw
 On many a gilded tome a ruddy glow,
 Dost count thyself a happy man the while.
 Blest in the converse those mute friends bestow,
 What lack'st thou yet thy leisure to beguile,
 So that thy bairns be near to glad thee with their smile ?

^c ἄστρων κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὀμήγυριν. Æsch. Ag. 5.

7.

Here my song ceaseth. Well content am I
 On this brief page to leave the rest untold.
This let the Muse whom thou so faithfully
 Hast lov'd and follow'd thro' the years of old—
 This let the Muse of History unfold!
 To her I leave the care of thy good name.
 In these frail rhymes I do but seek to hold
 The mirror up to nature: but I claim
 For thee far higher praise than what the world calls Fame!

^d Who has not been agreeably astonished when first he met with this truly English sentiment in Sophocles? It is the exquisite fragment numbered by Dindorf, 563:—

Φεῦ φεῦ, τί τούτου χάρμα μείζον ἂν λάβοις
 τοῦ γῆς ἐπιψεύσαντα κἄθ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ
 πυκνῆς ἀκοῦσαι ψακάδος εὐδούσῃ φρενί;

London,
 17th July, 1841.

SETTLERS IN AUSTRALIA:

A PRIZE POEM,

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE 24, 1846.

(Sⁿ)

BY

(1826-1857)

GEORGE OSBORNE MORGAN,

BALLIOL COLLEGE.

SECOND EDITION.



OXFORD:

T. AND G. SHRIMPTON, BROAD STREET.

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H. ALDEN, PRINTER, OXFORD.

SYNOPSIS.

THE POEM opens by regarding the Sea as the great bond of union between the various parts of the world—Opposite feelings which it awakened in the minds of the first inhabitants of the Earth—Causes which have led to this change—applied to the present state of England, particularly of the Manufacturing Districts—Description of the departure of a body of Emigrants—Voyage—Arrival in Port Jackson—Varieties of Scenery—Peculiarities of the country arising from the absence of any associations attached to it—Sydney—Natives—Return to the Emigrants—Picture of Australian life—Compared with that of old Pastoral times—Contrast between it and the state of things which an increase of population is likely to produce in Australia—Analogy between the Past and Future—Retrospect of the rise and fall of Empires, which gives us ground to suspect that Australia will one day attain the position for which its natural importance seems to destine it—Conclusion.



SETTLERS IN AUSTRALIA.

“ Augescunt aliæ gentes, aliæ minuuntur,
“ Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.”

LUCRETIVS.

WHO that has wandered by the ocean shore,
His full soul echoing to the wild waves' roar,
Feels not their Spirit as a thrilling bond,
Linking his fancy to the worlds beyond,
Till his rapt thoughts, exulting, yearn to stray
With the wan billows glimmering far away?
Earth has her barriers, but thou, Mighty Sea,
Bidst Man be One, divisionless, like thee.

Blank was their day who heard thy waves rejoice,^a
Nor hailed their echoes as a Brother's voice.
They feared thee, Ocean, and thy giant mirth,
And clung like children round their own green Earth.
Silent they came—at misty eve they stood,
Listening the hollow moaning of the flood,

^a Compare the “*Oceanus dissociabilis*” of Horace and numerous similar epithets applied to the sea by the ancients.

Till its low ripple seemed to die away,
Rising and falling on the viewless bay^b
Of a far land that haunted them, like gleams
Of lingering glories from forgotten dreams.

There is a mystery in a Nation's doom,
That whispers darkly in her hour of gloom ;
When to high Heaven a hungry people spread
Their outstretched hands and call aloud for bread.
It is a warning to go forth and reap
The lingering promise of the unopened deep.

I saw a mighty people, and a shore
Clustered with laden ships of costly store.
And far along the deaf and stunning sound
Of mighty cities rung and clashed around.
But here and there, there stood a lonely band,
With haggard looks, like aliens in the land ;
They turned and gazed upon the Ocean brine,—
England ! my country ! heed them, they were thine.
Yes, turn from fields, that green with summer corn
Wave deep and shadowy in the lights of morn ;
Turn from the smiling cot—the heathy green,
And all that gladdens England's village scene,

^b Compare Tennyson, *Lotus Eaters*.—

“ To him the gushing of the wave

“ Far, far away, did seem to mourn and rave

“ On alien shores.”

To where 'mid joys which he can never share,
The pale mechanic plies his sickly care ;
Doomed in some peopled wilderness to groan,
Around him thousands, yet himself alone ;
He hails the bark that beckons to pursue
Yon shadowy pathway o'er the distant blue ;
And hopes perchance beyond those waves to find
Some happier home, some country less unkind.

The winds are wakening—down a broadening bay
A vessel moves in stately pride away ;
A crowd stands gazing, and the ship again
Gives back the deep farewell of exiled men.
One I remember, through his boyhood bred
In his own hamlet folded in the shade
Of two bleak mountains, o'er whose cloudy height
His simple soul ne'er winged a wayward flight.
In careless pensiveness I saw him stand
Counting the breakers on the lessening strand,
And hard it seemed to leave the cherished ground
To which his earliest, fondest hopes were bound—
To lose whatever had been, and to be
Cast on the waste of blank futurity.
And now old thoughts came o'er him, old delights,
And dreams that told of dear familiar sights.
Last night at eve he watched the shadows fall
From those dark woods behind his cottage wall ;
That morn he turned again to linger there,
Fearing the anguish of a father's prayer ;

Never to come again—to walk no more
With those whose love he never knew before ;
Listening the hallowed Churchbells' mellow sound
Call the meek shepherds from the hills around,—
He turned, he spoke not—Oh! what tongue could tell
The simple sorrow of that heart's farewell.

The bark is gone, and she is seen no more,
And the round bay looks lonely as before.
Yes; she is gone for many a night to keep
Her silent vigils on the boundless deep;
Where the tall Cape half veils his misty form,
And seems to mingle with his own grey storm;^c
Through those green islands, where the men of old
Sang of calm places and a land of gold;
Until in airy distance dimly lost,
Rise the dark headlands of Australia's coast.

Bright was the morn, the weary wanderer rose
From dreams of home and memory's sweet repose;
Sudden he gazed, and on the circling shore
Cast his sad eye, and seemed to dream once more.
Pillars of rock he saw, around whose bed^d
The eddy waves eternal circles led;

^c Alluding to the peculiar appearances of the Cape in stormy weather.

^d Alluding to the North and South Head near Port Jackson.
“Two bare promontories of dark horizontal rock, between

Saw the clear sea-sand sparkle from afar,^e
 Like diamond vales in fabled Candahar.
 Before him slopes arose, with vistas green,
 Knots of deep shade and verdant banks between ;
 As over hill and isle and gleamy bay,
 Fell the full sunlight of the flooding day.

Onward he ranged, where Sydney's warder rock
 Lifts his proud portals to the billows' shock.
 Then all was changed—the dreary hills arose,^f
 Where the red rock with deeper splendour glows.
 Wide arid wastes and crag-built ridges there,
 Gave back the sultry sun's unclouded glare ;

which stupendous pillars, as through a colossal gate, we sailed into Port Jackson.”—Mrs. Meredith's *New South Wales*, page 34.

^e “The pure white silvery sand which forms the beach in several of these picturesque coves, gives them a particularly bright appearance.”—Mrs. Meredith's *New South Wales*, p. 35.

^f “Our route still lay through the same wild monotonous scenery as the day before. Trees without foliage, hills and valleys alike destitute of verdure, chasms and ravines, without a thread of water in their arid, stony depths, made up such a world of desolation, that the contemplation of it became absolutely oppressive, and I gladly listened to glowing descriptions of the green and beautiful plains of Bathurst, which we were to reach on the following day.”—Mrs. Meredith's *New South Wales*, page 73. Vid. also Pridden's *Australia*, pages 63, 64.

Dry rivers, scorched by some long summer's wrath,
 Yawned deep and dreary in his lonely path.
 And then the same sweet scene returned again,
 Bathurst's green downs and Illawara's plain,
 Where Yarrayne lingers 'mid his vale of flowers,^g
 And Paramatta hides her vine-clad bowers.^h
 What though for ages past they slumbered on,
 Sublime though silent, beautiful though lone;
 Yet the blithe spring-time came, the sunshine rose,
 Night brought her dews, and eve her soft repose.
 While round each printless shore and desert clime,
 The Blue Pacific rung his never-wearying chime.

How lightly fell Time's secret footstep there
 That woke no echo in that silent air!
 Six thousand years—and yet no sound arose
 To break the stillness of thy long repose;
 Mysterious land—and was it thine to hear
 Nought of the mighty world that thundered near?ⁱ
 Those everlasting hills, those mountains brown,
 On whose dark heights the first-born Sun look'd down,

^g Vid. Pridden's *Australia*, page 47.

^h "Paramatta lies in a low situation, and is remarkable for its fruits."—Vid. Mrs. Meredith's *New South Wales*, page 59, &c.

ⁱ Cf. Motherwell's Poems:—

"When every thing is sundering,

"And every one is wondering,

"And the huge globe goes thundering.

, "On, ever on."

When the young Earth to life's wild turmoil sprung,
And all the East with neighbouring battle rung,
What were they then? No legend tales have they
Of mighty men that lived and passed away;
So wild, so vacant do they gaze around,
Or Giants wakening in enchanted ground;
Like dead men's shades, that walk the world alone,
Striving to tell the things that must not be foreknown.

And who shall know them? but from Sydney's brow
The spell is fled—the busy trader now
Floats his broad pennon, and the tall ships throw
Their quivering shadows on the bay below.
The wanderer paused to hear the hallowed sound
Of old familiar names re-echoing round;
And with their sacred magic half believed
Each spot the holiness of home received.

And who is he who from the settler's gate¹
Now timorous shrinks and now returns to wait;
Whose narrow brow and vacant eye declare
How faint the gleam of mind reflected there?
Wild are his ways, unlike the ways of men,
Child of the woods, Australia's denizen.
The heart unquelled, the hand unstayed in strife,
The stern sublimity of untamed life,

¹ Vid. Pridden, page 121, &c.

E'en these he knows not—by the lurid glare
Of some lone fire he chants his muttered prayer,
Or in the far woods, when the moon is low,
With mystic dances waits the coming foe.

But ye, poor wanderers! who in doubtful mood
Thridded the boskage of the wildering wood:
Soon shall ye see your little store increase,
Of cornfields glimmering through the forest trees.
For you no more the jealous barrier line,
No more the hedgerows trim your realms confine;
But in some island valley green and still^k
Ye live unheeded, following Nature's will;
Or rest at noon-tide by some purple lake,
Whose drowsy ripple scarcely seems to break
On its still shores, while drooping overhead
In heavy air the lush Geraniums spread,
And far away the wild bird slides along,
Nor wakes the woodland with a passing song.

Oh, blessed change! to leave this weltering strife,
To leave this pent-up agony of life.
Beneath blue heavens your bleating flocks to fold,
Like peaceful shepherds in the days of old;

^k Cf. Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*,
"The island valley of Avilion."

From Nature's self to gather endless love,
And hold communion with the stars above.

A brief Farewell—and yet when some few years
Have told their wondrous tale of hopes and fears,
Another change shall come. Those prison towers—
That fetter's clang that haunts your dreamy bowers,
Whisper of stormy hours that yet must be,
Marring that state of primal majesty.
Ye have not long to rest—the nations ride
Onward from isle to isle, from tide to tide.
Onward they ride, with all their monster birth,
Awakening up the slumbering void of Earth,
Through all her quiet places, as the Sun
Comes trampling out the starlights one by one.^m

Great things lie round us—but we turn away,
Rapt in the promise of our brief to-day.
And seldom is the Giant Spirit free
To cope unshackled with Futurity.
Yet there are times when visions dim and dread,
Like glimpses of the living to the dead,ⁿ

^m The idea of this verse is borrowed from a line in French's Poem on the descent of the Rhone.

ⁿ In the same way that the events of life have been supposed to be made known to the souls of the dead (see Pind. Olymp. 14. 20. and Aristotle's Ethics, c. i.), we may suppose a mysterious connection to exist between the Present and Future.

Steal on our senses—are they idle things
To which the wayward fancy fondly clings?
Or doth experience, with reflected rays,
People the hollow dark of unseen days,
Like the great sky above, that deigns to keep
Its broken image on the mirror deep?

Fond Man, look round thee—all behind is change;
O'er heaps of desolation on we range;
Earth is a shifting stage, where empires play,
Each has his pageant—each his little day.
And some are passed and gone, and some remain;
What will they be? their sleep is not in vain.

And thou, Australia, though the latest born
Of Earth's high children, be thou not forlorn.
Yes! there are voices which rejoice o'er thee,
As o'er a kingly infant's destiny.
Wide sheltering crags, within whose circling base
The nation's fleets have found a resting-place;
A thousand flocks that range the level downs;
And rivers gliding through majestic towns;
All these shall yet be thine! arise, and be
Great in thy truth as in thy mystery!

PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD AFTER THE
BATTLE OF CULLODEN.

A PRIZE POEM

by John Arden, Esq. of the Middle Temple, Esq.

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE XVI. MDCCC XLVII.



OXFORD:
FRANCIS MACPHERSON.
MDCCC XLVII.

PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD AFTER THE
BATTLE OF CULLODEN.

Καὶ θνατὸν οὕτως ἔθνος ἄγει
μοῖρα.

Pindar Nem. xi, 43.

HATH the sea life and knowledge? doth there roll
Deep in the breast of waves a conscious soul?
Is there a spirit in the storm that thrills
The mountain-heart of the eternal hills?
Do the winds sigh with sorrow? and their moan,
Is it some voice that glides and breathes alone?
Is woe upon the rivers when they grieve
In mournful music round the couch of eve?
Is there a sense in earth and air and sky
When the brave falter and the mighty die?
For lo! around Clanranald's lonely cave
The grief of many waters swells the wave,

The winds of night their dirge of battle bring
From the lost field of Scotland's exil'd king,
And worn and sad, his warriors far away,
The baffled Stuart mourns Culloden day^a.
His Highland hearts are hush'd—the strife is o'er
That shook the shield, and wav'd the good claymore ;
Low now is laid Glengarry's trusty steel,
And quench'd the flashing brands of brave Lochiel ;
Murray—Macdonald—Keppoch—coldly gone,
And mute the warrior cry of Cameron.

Dark was the night, and thick with gloom the day
Where sad and lorn the weary chieftain lay ;
Friends—kinsfolk—warriors fled, and lonely there
The hope that linger'd yet was half despair.
Scant was the boon he crav'd,—that deep repose
For one short hour might win him from his woes :
But slumber would not soothe his rocky bed,
Nor o'er that burning brow her solace shed ;
Wakeful he lay, and heard the fretting gale
Loud moaning o'er the braes of Corrodale ;
Now hailing mid the storm's unearthly roar
The sorrow of his awful sires of yore ;

^a “ The die was risk'd and foully cast
Upon *Culloden day*.”

Jacobite Reliques, vol. ii. song lxxiv.

Now yearning to defy the foe again,
And wield the sword of vengeance for his slain ;
Dreaming that Heaven his shield and strength would be
To weave once more the wreath of victory^b.
But cease thy dreams, lone Prince, on yonder height
Behold ! unwonted fires are gleaming bright !
And hark ! there echoes round yon ruddy glow
The martial music of th' unsparing foe^c.
O'er mount and wave they urge their noble prey
As bursts the hound upon the stag at bay,
On through the wild they come with kindling eye—
And shall to-morrow see the victim die ?
Ah no ! a star is on the brow of night,
From the dark cloud there leaps a living light,
Hope shall again the wanderer's woes beguile,
And pity lives at last in woman's smile.

^b Throughout his wanderings, Charles' confidence in the protection of Providence was remarkable. In speaking of the hardships which he had undergone to one of his companions he said, " Since the battle of Culloden, I have endured more than would kill a hundred men ; sure Providence does not design this for nothing. I am certainly yet reserved for some good."—See Chambers' History of the Rebellion, p. 106.

^c Lord Mahon says there were at this time on the Long Island militia and regular troops, to the number of 2,000 men, engaged in eager search for the Prince, while the shores were surrounded by small vessels of war, and that concealment or escape must have proved alike impossible but for Flora Macdonald.

High-minded Flora^d, deathless fame be thine
Fair daughter of Macdonald's storied line,
Strong was thy soul—the truth of man above,—
And thy heart beat with more than woman's love.
Thee from the hunted exile's lonely side
Woe could not sever, nor could death divide.
Long as his memory lives thy deeds shall claim
The glory of a high and noble name,
And wreath the rugged brow of war with smiles,
Thou hero-maiden of the western isles!
Lo! o'er the deep they glide—that island maid,
And the lorn prince in homely garb array'd:—
Frail is their bark, yet seaward o'er the waves
That seek Benbecula's resounding caves,
They swiftly bound, till, bright with sunset's smile,
Behind them gleams the brow of Rona's isle.
Yet seaward still the steadfast boatmen sweep,
For well they know who bids them brave the deep;—
That vesture cannot veil^e, those weeds efface
His kingly bearing, his majestic grace.

^d “We were entertained with the usual hospitality by Mr. Macdonald and his lady Flora Macdonald, a name that will be mentioned in history, and, if courage and fidelity be virtues, mentioned with honour. She is a woman of middle stature, soft features, gentle manners, and elegant presence.”—Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 63.

^e “Bishop Forbes informs us, that he more than once heard Macleod speak of the utter uselessness of the Prince attempting to dissemble the indefinable air which distinguished him.

Now isle and headland fade, and shadowy night
Frowns on the woful wanderer's dreary flight ;
Home to their beetling crag the seabirds fly,
And raise with tuneless shriek their boding cry ;
While the swart raven sails with pinion slow,
And hoarsely breathes a prophet voice of woe ;
And the deep thunder of the raging seas
Is echoing round the rocky Hebrides,
As though Iona's genii, rous'd from sleep,
Had call'd the hosts of air to war along the deep.
Yet hark ! the chieftain chants in accents bold^f
Some thrilling legend of the days of old,
And breathes the strain those billowy paths along
As though he sooth'd the waves of night with song.

‘There is not a person,’ he said, ‘who knows what the air of a noble or great man is, but, upon seeing the Prince in any disguise he could put on, would see something about him that was not ordinary—something of the stately and the grand.’”—Jesse, *Memoirs of the Pretenders*, vol. ii. p. 68.

^f “Exposed in such a vessel in the cold night air, at the mercy of a raging sea, and at the same time haunted by the fear of man's more deadly hostility, the sensations of the little party cannot be supposed to have been very agreeable. Charles could not help perceiving the uneasiness of his attendants, and anxious to compensate, by all the means in his power, for the pain which he had occasioned to them, he endeavoured to sustain their spirits by singing and talking. He sang the lively old song entitled ‘The Restoration,’ and told a few playful stories, which yielded them some amusement.”—Chambers, p. 99.

See now ! they fondly seek the welcome shore,
And deem their refuge won, their peril o'er.
But lo ! the flash ! the sound ! and o'er them fly
The hissing balls—the foe, the foe is nigh !
There on the shore in grim array they throng,
And cave and rock the volleying peal prolong.
He fled—but not from woe—full many a day
Beheld him o'er the island deserts stray
All desolate and lone, while midnight shed
Her pitying tears o'er his unshelter'd head.
Famish'd and weary on the shores of Skye
The peasants mark'd his woe with softening eye ;
Lone Raasay's shepherds saw him rest awhile
In the deep valleys of their rugged isle ;
And round his couch of heather when he slept
With faithful care unwearied watches kept.
But thither rush'd the foe, and Moidart's shore
Beckon'd from far the wanderer's feet once more ;
Again he sought Loch Shiel's forsaken strand,
Where erst exulting march'd his eager band ;

* “ Approaching the coast of Skye, they were received by a volley of musketry from the soldiers stationed there, but none of the balls took effect, and the rowers, vigorously plying their oars, bore them away from that scene of danger, and enabled them to disembark on another point.”—Mahon, vol. iii. p. 500.

Again he trod the heath of Finnan's vale,
Where first his banner caught the mountain gale^h;—
But mute the echoes which had hail'd him there,
And sad the silence of that desert lair.
The seabird saw him on her crag intrude,
The eagle on his stormy solitude,
The homeless clansman, driven by the foe
To lofty ranges of the mountain roe,
In wild amazement met the exile there
Wasted and pale with want, and worn with care.
Where'er he gaz'd, the Victor's waving brand
Shed war and desolation o'er the land;
Where'er he turn'd, the gathering foe was near,
And pass and valley dark with plume and spear.

Now in Glenmorrison behold him stand
Beneath the shieling of a robber-band!
The daring seven, of aspect stern and rude,
Who boldly held that haughty solitude.
No aliens they—on dark Culloden's plain
For him their mighty claymores heap'd the slain.
No dastard souls—they vow'd in kindled ire,
When o'er their dwellings rose th' avenging fire,
To front again the whelming tide of woe,
And brave with sheathless steel th' insulting foe.

^h A monument bearing a Latin inscription still points out the memorable spot.

Cheer'd by the faith of true and steadfast menⁱ
The Stuart lingers in that desert glen,
And like the Bruce of old in Rachin's isle
'Mid darkest peril finds repose awhile.

'Tis midnight, and around the lawless band,
A watchful host, the shadowy mountains stand;
While high in heaven is glimmering fair and bright,
The starry diadem of solemn night.
On far Ben Nevis sleeps the moonlight gleam,
O'er still Loch Ness the stars in beauty beam,
And mid yon cavern glides that radiance pale,
Where slumbering lie the champions of the vale.
But lo! the Chief on bended^k knee is there—
Apart he breathes the thrilling voice of prayer!—
Thou murm'ring breeze, be silent! hush thy moan,
Thou rushing stream, beneath that hallow'd tone!—
And ye to whom yon radiant realms are given,
Bright angel warders, waft the vow to Heaven!

Anon the cave is tenantless, and now
The wanderer rests on stern Benalder's brow,

ⁱ See an account of these famous robbers, generally called The Seven Men of Glenmorrison, in Chambers, p. 116.

^k "He was observed to make a practice of withdrawing himself every morning and evening to perform his devotions."—*Ibid.*, p. 117.

Where mantling heath and rifted rock conceal
The faithful Cluny and the brave Lochiel¹.
There in that mountain-home of storm and blast
Hope sheds her rainbow o'er his doom at last,
And soon he hails in Moidart's sheltering bay
The bark that waits to bear him far away.

Oh! dark the gloom that o'er his spirit fell
When to the mountain-land he bade farewell,
And saw the valley fade, the cliff grow dim
From whence the Monarch-Bird had welcom'd him^m.
There once had gleam'd his glory's meteor ray—
There trod the stately Sevenⁿ—but where were they?
Thence with the brave he sought the path of Fame—
And there return'd—but crush'd and lone he came.
Was it a dream? alas! beside him rose
The chieftain's sigh, the clansman's murmur'd woes;

¹ "They resided in a singular retreat, called the Cage, on the side of Mount Benalder; it was concealed by a close thicket, and half suspended in the air."—Lord Mahon's History of England, vol. iii. p. 504.

^m "As they neared the shore, an eagle that came hovering round the ship, delighted the adventurers by its favourable augury. 'Here,' said Lord Tullibardine, turning to his master, 'is the king of birds come to welcome your Royal Highness to Scotland.'"—Mahon, vol. iii. p. 342.

ⁿ "These were afterwards designated as the 'Seven Men of Moidart,' and the subsequent fate of each has been explored by the Jacobites with mournful curiosity."—Ibid., vol. iii. p. 346.

For there were bursting hearts, the shatter'd wreck
Of Fate and Fortune, on that woful deck !

Oh ! had he found the hero's glorious grave,
And perish'd on Culloden with the brave,
Nations had breath'd his dirge, and deathless Fame
Hallow'd for aye the latest Stuart's name.
Though bright his Morn with manhood's joyous pride,
How thick the darkness fell at Eveningtide ° !
Monarchs forsook who foster'd him of old,
And faithless Gallia's ancient love grew cold.
Then, stung by treachery and sear'd with care,
He bow'd his soaring spirit to despair ;
Sought in excess and passion Lethe's gloom,
And steel'd the hearts that soften'd o'er his doom.
Yet oft the buried hope of youth would burn,
The ancient zeal, the former soul return,
Still were his country's faithful warriors dear,
Still would he shed for her the patriot's tear ;—

° “ His character had darkened with his fortunes. A long train of disappointments and humiliations working on a fiery mind, spurred it almost into frenzy and degraded it. The habit of drinking, which for some years he indulged without restraint, seems to have been first formed during his Highland adventures and escapes ; when a dram of whiskey might sometimes supply the want of food and rest.”—Mahon, vol. iii. p. 554.

E'en when old age with pain and sorrow came^p
The pibroch's note could wake the slumbering flame.
Scion of warrior sires, his flashing eye
Shone with the pride of old, and yearn'd for Victory.

Land of the loyal, when the Stuart fell,
Thy faithful Mountains sigh'd a fond farewell,
The dirge of Freedom peal'd along the gale,
And tears of Sorrow flow'd in every vale ;
Yet did that Conflict quell despotic sway,
It was the storm that roll'd thy thrall away,
The Cloud of Mercy hovering o'er thy tears,
A Fiery Pillar in thy path of years.
Still do thy children love Prince Charlie's name,
Like flowers along thy valleys lives his fame ;
Still many a bard in thrilling numbers sings
The hero-offspring of a hundred kings ;
Thy shepherds love to linger where he stood,
Of Gladsmuir sing, and ancient Holyrood ;
Tell how he fought that unavailing day,
And sigh once more Culloden's woes away.

^p " It is also an affecting, and, I may surely add, redeeming circumstance in the life of this ill-fated prince, that amongst the amusements of his last and lonely hours, was that of playing on the Highland bagpipe those airs which in his brighter days soothed him in the bivouack, or led him to victory."—Chambers, p. 143.

But memory kindling wakes a happier theme,
They see their homes in conscious gladness beam ;
The hills that echo with the hunter's horn,
The valleys where they bind the golden corn,
The peaceful throne where queenly beauty smiles,
And vassal-nations greet the Lady of the Isles.

'Mid alien graves he sleeps ! the stately dome
Of Tiber's ancient city shrouds his tomb !
Peace to his ashes ! tho' they coldly lie
Where heroes sleep, and wrecks of grandeur sigh.
No relique hallows more that solemn shrine
Than the last urn of Stuart's haughty line.
Well might he roam, with slow and pausing tread,
The Pilgrim Bard^a, the Minstrel of the dead,
To hail amid the tombs that kindling name
Theme of his youth, and hero of his fame !
Lo ! as he leans upon his staff, return
The former dreams—the ancient glances burn !
Bright Holyrood is there—the pibroch rings—
And stately Flora moves a mate for Kings !
There smiles the Prince mid deeds of war and pride,
For Waverley hath won his blushing bride !

^a "Soon after his arrival I took Sir Walter to St. Peter's, which he had resolved to visit, that he might see the tomb of the last of the Stuarts."—See Scott's Life by Lockhart, vol. vii. p. 363.

See ! yet again the scene of battle shines,
And proud Mac Ivor leads the serried lines !
Now stern Red-gauntlet waves the burning brand,
Lord of the dinted brow, and ruthless hand !
Ah ! who shall tell how yearn'd the minstrel's mind
To breathe again these visions to the wind ;
To chant once more the legend of his lay,
And chide with spells of song his grief away !
In vain ! e'en then the gloom of night was nigh,
The shadows brooded o'er the poet's eye—
Yet, liegeman true, he stood beside yon bier,
The scenes he lov'd in youth, in age were dear,
His latest sigh to Scotland's fame he gave,
And his last dream was on her Stuart's grave !
Quench'd was the soul of song—Health—Hope
 had fled !
The Bard was dying whilst he wept the dead.

JOHN ADAMS,

MAGDALEN HALL,

OXFORD :

PRINTED BY I. SHRIMPTON.

COLUMBUS IN CHAINS.

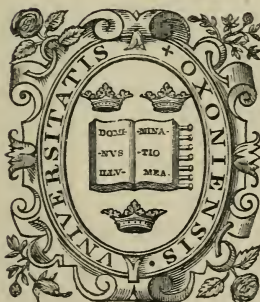
COLUMBUS IN CHAINS.

A PRIZE POEM

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JULY V. MDCCCXLVIII.

by
Charles Blackstone
Scholar of Corpus Christi
College, Oxford
(L.C.)



OXFORD:

FRANCIS MACPHERSON.

M DCCC XLVIII.

Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
Nec civium ardor prava jubentium
Nec vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ;—

HOR. III. iii. 1—4.

ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πῆμα καὶ χαρὰ
πᾶσι κυκλοῦσιν, οἷον ἄρ-
κτου στροφάδες κέλευθοι.

SOPH. TRACHINIÆ, 129—131.

COLUMBUS IN CHAINS.

BEHIND the purple islands of the West
The glorious Sun sinks slowly to his rest ;
With ceaseless dash upon Domingo's strand
The foaming ripple curls along the sand ;
And, coyly skimming o'er the wave's white crest,
Or gently borne upon its swelling breast,
The birds of ocean seem in sportive play
To hail the evening of the Tropic day.
Forth from the bay along the murmurous seas
A vessel speeds before the Evening breeze ;
Like soaring swan her milk-white wings are spread,
And, proudly glittering at her tall mast-head,
The lustrous banner, floating o'er the main,
Flings on the wind the blazoned towers of Spain.

The sea below, the clear blue sky above,
All tell of peace, of happiness, and love ;
'Twere hard to fancy aught could intervene
To break the magic of so calm a scene :

But ne'er may Nature, aidless and alone,
Give to the troubled mind a kindlier tone ;
How bright the sky, how green soe'er the grass,
All are as transient shadows in a glass ;
For, changeful ever, hid from mortal eyes,
Deep in the heart a liquid mirror lies,
Where still, as clear or dark the current flows,
So, clear or dark, reflected Nature shows.

What wonder then, if, while with anxious glance
Columbus gazes on the Isle's expanse,
(Whence, like the eagle with her captured prey,
The plunging bark is bearing him away,)
E'en this fair scene should pall, devoid of power
To soothe the sorrows of a gloomy hour,
To quell the griefs which through his bosom throng,
Crowned by that keenest pang, the sense of wrong !
Not all the beauties of that lovely isle
Can from his lips win e'en a passing smile ;
O'er the white range of happy Cottage homes
With moody gaze his eye unsettled roams ;
The solemn woods that look in silence down
On the roof-ridges of the infant town—
The mighty hills that in their grandeur stand
Guides to the sky and warders of the land—
Though wafting each the full deep breath of peace,
Yet cannot from its pain that aching heart release.

A lonely captive on the guarded deck,
He ponders o'er his sinking fortune's wreck ;
A wreck so sudden that its chances seem
The dim creations of some hideous dream.

Dark is the tale, and fraught with sadness all
The bitter records of the Hero's fall ;
Ill could fell Envy brook that conscious pride,
True to the right, and deaf to all beside ;
That noble soul which, bold in knightly worth,
Soared high above the paltry pomps of earth ^a ;
That calm and thoughtful eye upturned to heaven,
Those pure desires to their Great Author given ;
Swift to Castille she flew ;—in jealous fear
The Prince to kindred baseness bowed his ear ^b ;
And o'er the main the fated envoy sped
To wreak his fury on the guiltless head.

There are, whose memories from the Past come down
For ever clinging to some great renown ;

^a "The religion thus deeply seated in his soul diffused a sober dignity and a benign composure over his whole deportment."—Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus."

^b "Every vessel that returned from the New World came freighted with complaints, representing the character and conduct of Columbus and his brothers in the most odious point of view, and reiterating the illiberal but mischievous insinuation that they were foreigners, who had nothing but their own interest and gratification in view."—Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus."

So stand in infamy from age to age
The foul accusers of the Grecian sage ^c;
E'en so shall Bovadilla's fame be built
Upon the lasting basement of his guilt ^d;
And ages brand upon the roll of shame
In blackest characters the traitor's name!
He comes, the minion of a servile band,
Armed with a faithless monarch's brief command;
In silent malice or with taunting word
Each charge is breathed, each shameless plea pre-
ferred;

And he, who truly from a God-built throne
Made every care within his Isles his own,
Who centred in himself both small and great,
The nursing father of the infant state—
Hurled at one sweep from that too giddy height,
Sinks from the gazing world to starless night.

So when the whirlwind rolls its stormy tide
Triumphant o'er the royal forest's pride,

^c Anytus and Melitus, the accusers of Socrates.

^d "The person chosen for this most momentous office was Don Francisco de Bobadilla: he is represented, with apparent justice, as needy, passionate, and ambitious—three powerful objections to his acting as judge in a case where the utmost caution and candour were required. . . . No sooner did he hear of the arrival of Columbus (at San Domingo), than he gave orders to put him in irons, and to confine him in the fortress."—Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus."

And roaring wild as deafening furnace-fires
Bows, like lithe reeds, the larches' feathery spires,
Upon the rocky mountain-side at last
Some giant Pine confronts the howling blast,
For one brief moment totters to its base—
Then falls a ruin from its pride of place,
Crashing through golden furze and purple heath
Down to the angry torrent far beneath.

Soon speeding from the Western Isles again
The vessel tracks her homeward course to Spain,
And bears, a noble freight, like midnight thief
With fetters bound, the gallant Island-Chief—
A host of passions strive for mastery now
Upon his furrowed cheek and knitted brow ;
Dark thoughts of vengeance, pride, despair, disdain,
All chase each other through his wildered brain ;
So, in a weary vision of the night,
An hour before the breaking of the light,
Upon the dim white wall in shadowy throng
A line of phantoms glides in haste along,
And still before the sleeper's mind perplexed
Each, as it passes, beckons up the next.

The galling fetters clank upon his hands,
As gazing from the lofty stern he stands,
A darkening gloom shed o'er his face and form,
Like the hot calm before the thunder-storm.

His fancy wanders o'er those olden days
When every tongue proclaimed the Adventurer's
praise,
Ere yet the rumours of ungenerous Fame
Engrained a blot upon his honoured name—
Old memories rouse him from his dreamful trance,
His whole soul kindles into utterance;
The blighting thought of all his cruel ill
A moment checks the current of his will—
Till, as a wave beneath some jutting rock
Recoils a moment from the thundering shock,
Then bursts with two-fold vigour on the beach,
Forth flows the long-pent tide of struggling speech—
“Farewell, blest Isles, beneath whose peaceful shade
I fondly hoped my course might yet be staid,
Till mighty Wisdom should her lore impart,
And guide the savage in the paths of art;
Till, wrought by toiling hands, the virgin field^e
The bounteous offspring of its womb should yield;

^e “In this Island . . . there are mountains of very great size and beauty, vast plains, groves, and very fruitful fields, admirably adapted for tillage, pasture, and habitation . . . and moreover it abounds in various kinds of spices, gold, and other metals.”—“Select letters of Columbus, with other original documents relating to his four voyages to the New World.” Translated and edited by R. H. Major, Esq., of the British Museum—printed for the Hakluyt Society.

And, glancing back unwonted rays, might shine
The long-hid treasures of the teeming mine—
Then might the riches of this destined shore
Command a blessing on their hallowed store;
Redeem the soil which erst the Saviour trod^f,
And bid the world confess the Christian's God.
Celestial Hope beamed fresh upon my soul,
From half-seen forms I shaped the perfect whole;
Safe in the convoy of my Heavenly Guide,
Beyond the seas I wooed my unknown bride;
A few short hours in glad fruition past,
Of that new life behold the close at last;
The airy fabric of my dreams o'erthrown—
Once more I stand unaided and alone;
No—not alone—shame on the coward sound—
My guardian Angel still is hovering round;
The links my country forged my country's hand^g
Alone shall loosen at my King's command;
Forth from the cloud my star once more may shine,
And gild the Future with a light divine;

^f "He looks forward with joy and confidence to the reception of the true faith by great countries, and to the acquisition for himself of wealth, which shall enable him to make another crusade, and recover the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the unbelievers."—"Sterling's Essays."—Columbus, vol. i. p. 51.

^g "They would have taken off his irons, but to this he would not consent," &c.—Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus."

Let envious man work out his ruthless will—
Unchanged and sure, my God befriends me still !”

So speaks the Hero, pausing yet to trace
The glimmering outline of each much-loved place ;
His straining eye yet lingers o’er the shape
Of sinking hill and fast-receding cape ;
Till ’neath the curtain of the evening shades
In gathering mist the dim horizon fades.

Swift bounds the bark ; and soon upon the shore
Of vine-clad Spain Columbus stands once more ;
At fair Granada see the conclave met—
High in the midst the royal Judges set ;
With deep reliance on the Eternal Laws,
Before his king he justifies his cause ;
Dragged to the day the accusing traitress quails,
The still small voice of mighty Truth prevails,
And nerved by right, one toil-worn man can boast
A battle nobly fought, and won against a host.
A brighter gleam pervades his darkling breast,
His wrongs are owned, his fears well-nigh at rest ;
And flattering Hope gives earnest to his thought
Of deeds more great than all the Past has wrought !
Such is the hope the wild-swan’s death-notes speak,
Such the bright flush upon the hectic cheek ;
So glows the wood with Autumn’s golden light,
Quick doomed to fade before the wintry night !

For purblind Justice, veiling half her face,
With niggard hand arrests her tide of grace ;
The cheering Sun but half dispels the haze—
The ungenial mist still clogs his struggling rays ;
Another lords it on the Western shore^h,
The Isles he loved so well are his no more !
What though no longer on his shackled hands
The unworthy fetters press their galling bands,
Unhealed by Time, the iron's rankling smart
Has entered deep into his wounded heart ;—

“ High in my halls,” he cries, “ no scutcheons hang,
My badge those links which on my ankles rang ;
I gave Castille the dower of half a world—
On shores unknown her banner I unfurled ;
O'er trackless seas I guided safe her ranks—
Chains and a prison were my Country's thanks !
No—on my chamber-wall suspended place
Those lasting monuments of Spain's disgrace ;
There shall they hang for ever in my sight,
And when I bid this weary world good night,
Then fail not to perform my last behest,
That—wheresoe'er my weary bones shall rest—

^h “ The person chosen to supersede Bovadilla was Don Nicholas de Ovando, commander of Lares, of the order of Alcantara.”—Washington Irving's “ Life of Columbus.”

There may those chains amid the chilling gloom
Rust by my side, companions in the tomb !”

But why should man for fading visions grieve,
The dullest morn oft brings the brightest eve ;
December’s snow and March’s darkening day
Are but the heralds of the radiant May ;
And had the Hero, when the storm was o’er,
Returned a victor to his rule once more,
Perchance in luxury of hard-worn ease
He had not further dared the Western seas ;
Then had Columbia been a name unknownⁱ,
And strangers reaped the crop his hand had sown.

Where bright Havannah rears its towers on high
Beneath the sunshine of a Western sky,
Th’ Adventurer sleeps^j; above his quiet grave
No more can calumny or slander rave ;
The babbling world with all its noisy rout
Rolls on its ceaseless current far without ;
The only sound that breaks the stillness there,
Is the sweet cadence of the chanted prayer,

ⁱ The actual continent of America was not discovered by Columbus till his fourth and last voyage.

^j The body of Columbus was first buried in the Church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, in Valladolid; in 1513 it was removed to the Chapel of Santa Christo, in Seville; in 1536 to the Cathedral of St. Domingo; whence it was finally conveyed by the Spaniards to its present resting-place at Havannah, Dec. 20th, 1795, on the cession of Hispaniola to the French.

Which on the solemn organ's waves of tone
Swells to the arching heights of massive stone,
And floating upward through the twilight gray,
'Mid labyrinthine groinings melts away.

His ashes moulder in their kindred dust—
His memory claims the life-right of the Just ;
Earth in oblivion shrouds his rusted chains,
His name a beacon to the world remains ;
His star has guided to the Western shore
New wanderers in the path he trod before—
Heroic Gama, by its radiance led,
Tracked the old footsteps of the mighty dead ;
Led by that star across the Atlantic's flood,
On the New World the Pilgrim-Fathers stood ;
And, westward still, from out the weary strife
On surging waves rolls on the tide of life ^k ;
The ancient glory is from Susa gone,
The lion roams through wasted Babylon ;
In Europe's towns, with new-born strength again
Is heard the busy hum of toiling men ;
Fair Plenty smiles along her fragrant leas,
Her Merchant-Princes rule the conquered seas ;

^k " Westward the course of Empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day,
Time's noblest offspring is the last."—Bp. Berkeley.

While far away beyond the Western main
The wild Savannah and the uncultured plain
Call on our struggling multitudes to come
In trustful ardour to their yearning home.

Then¹ launch we forth upon that mighty tide,
Our path the Future, and the Past our guide ;
Then shall the great Adventurer's ancient hope
Revive and broaden to its widest scope ;
Unstained by wasting sword and scorching flame,
The grateful world shall bless the Saviour's name ;
The radiant Cross shall flash along the night,
And all the Isles reflect the glorious light ;
No phantom then shall gentle Peace appear,
And happy Earth at last shall hail the "Golden
Year !"

CHARLES BLACKSTONE,

SCHOLAR OF CORPUS.

¹ "Alas, where now are the Hengsts and Alarics of our still glowing, still expanding Europe? who, when their home is grown too narrow, will, like fire-pillars, guide onwards those superfluous masses of indomitable living valour ; equipped, not now with the battle-axe and war-chariot, but with the steam-engine and plough-share?"—Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus."

10
THE NIGER:

A Prize Poem,

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE XII, M DCCC L.

BY

WILLIAM ALLAN RUSSELL,

Lusby Scholar, Magdalen Hall.

SECOND EDITION.



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1870.

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THE NIGER.

DARK-rolling billows heaving evermore,
Lonely and vast, by many a fabled shore :
Far in the gleaming empire of the Sun,
Age after age the lordly stream hath run,
From secret source which mortal ne'er hath seen,
Deep-hidd'n perchance, where never sound hath been
Or sign of life,—where tropic summers glow
On silent peaks of everlasting snow ;
Down in his mystic depths unfathom'd lies
The mirror'd blaze of Afric's cloudless skies ;
No ports hath he ; along his mighty tide
No traffic sounds, no laden galleons ride,
While calm as sleep, or crisp'd by sultry airs
Whisp'ring wild music in his reedy lairs,—
Or swoll'n by tropic rains, careering strong,
Like rushing hosts his waters speed along,—

(E'en as they flow'd when all the earth was young,
 A mystery e'en in fable darkly sung)—
 'Till gliding, shadow-like, from light of day,
 Lost 'neath the desert sands they wind their sunless
 way.

Thus whisper'd Fame ; and wondrous tales there be
 Told by the quaint old sire of History,
 Weaver of golden fables, of a land
 Of fire and drought, and ocean-wastes of sand,
 And a great river of the torrid zone,^a
 By a far city flowing all unknown,
 Where dwelt the ebon children of the Sun,
 A race of dwarfs, enchanters every one.
 Nor unexplor'd the dim Atlantic shore
 By Egypt, mother of primeval lore,
 Where Hanno saw the blazing peaks of light
 Reddening with flame the sable brow of night.
 Oft too the wonder-loving Arab told,
 How, by fair tow'rs and mosques that burn'd with
 gold,
 From ancient times the great Dark Water roll'd,
 And bright-dom'd palace swept in silence by,
 And cities of the waste, beneath a rosy sky :
 There sultans reign'd, the Prophet's faithful sons,
 Girt by mute crowds of swarthy myrmidons ;

^a Herod. ii. 32, 33. διεξιελθόντας δὲ χώρον πολλὸν ψαμμώδεια
 ἐπιελθεῖν ἄνδρας μικροὺς χρῶμα δὲ μέλανας· παρὰ δὲ τὴν πόλιν ῥεῖν
 ποταμὸν μέγαν . . . καὶ τοὺς οὗτοι ἀπίκοντο ἀνθρώπους γόητας εἶναι πάντας

And theirs were marts with goodly bales heap'd high,
Spice, and red gold, and milk-white ivory,
And priceless freightage brought from many a land
By the fleet desert-ship o'er seas of sand.

Throughout the list'ning nations 'gan prevail,
In later times, the negro captive's tale,
A simple tale, for sorrow made it plain ;
Sadly he thought of home, who felt the chain,
Sadly he spoke of native dale and hill,
In a strange land, to please a tyrant's will ;
Scarce he recall'd the scenes of early years,
Where grief had blotted memory's page with tears,
The fight,—the captive's march,—the ocean crost,—
A foreign rule,—and home for ever lost :
But this brief story fir'd th' adventurous mind,
And rous'd to pity spirits wise and kind,
Till Wilberforce annuil'd the guilty laws,
And Park went forth a pilgrim in his cause.

'Tis tropic noon ! and not a single sound
Breathes on th' eternal stillness all around ;
'Tis tropic noon, and yet the sultry time
Seems like the twilight of some fairy clime.
Spreading in lone luxuriance round is seen
The mangrove's tangled maze of sombre green ;
Thro' mists that dwell those baleful fens upon
Large-orb'd and pale peers out the shrouded Sun,

And, struggling sickly thro' the vapourous day,
Dull on the windless water falls the pallid ray.
So slumb'ringly the glassy river goes,
The water-lily dips not, as it flows ;
The swallow, haunter of the charmèd spot,
Skims thro' the silence, and awakes it not ;
Perch'd as in sleep, the grey king-fisher broods,
A sentinel among the solitudes ;
And faints the breeze beneath the heavy sky,
Nor bends the bulrush, as it loiters by
Thro' long green walls of forest-trees, that throw
Unwavering shadows in the flood below ;
And droops from topmost boughs, (like garlands dight
By elfin hands,) the gaudy parasite,
Crowning the wave with flow'rs, and high above
The tall acacia moves, or seems to move
Its feathery foliage in the enamour'd air,
That seems, tho' all unheard, to linger there.
Might'st fancy all, the earth, the air, the stream,
Still unawaken'd from Creation's dream.
When, hark ! there sounds along the lonely shore
A voice those wilds had never heard before ;
(So rings the axe throughout the sleeping wood,
And scares the Dryads in their solitude ;)
The stranger echo stole along the wave ;
The dreaming groves a mellow'd answer gave ;
The wild bird dipp'd—the diamond-ey'd gazelle
Started and paus'd,—then fled into the dell ;

Stirr'd by no breeze, the tree-tops seemed to sigh—
When, lo! again the still-repeated cry;
Hark! 'tis the leadsman, chaunting long and clear
The changing fathoms as a ship draws near,—
And all at once rings out the Briton's hearty cheer!
Seethes the dark flood beneath her plashing wheel,
And leap the cloven billows from her keel,
Till, far retreating to the water's edge,
They rise and sink among the swaying sedge;
The swaying sedge mysterious tidings bore,
Nodding and whisp'ring far along the shore;
The murmuring shore of strange invader tells,
And water-spirits listen in their cells.
A crew of Britons on the Niger's wave!
They glide as in a dream! the young, the brave,
And Science' thoughtful sons are gather'd there—
The negro's friend—the hardy mariner:
Oh! who can tell—but they whose hearts beat high
With the wild ardour of Discovery—
The thrill that hails each wonder-waking sight,
And gives to danger's self a keen delight?
Oh! who can tell, what pleasing awe, to seem,
(As oft in childhood, or in eastern dream,)
Venturing on some enchanter's realm unknown,
The first to break the spell,—and wand'ring on
Where as the thronging beauties round us rise,
Grows the wild joy and ev'ry terror dies!

Thus were they dauntless, tho' around them there
Death's shadowy legions hover'd in the air,
Unseen, unheard, yet mightier far to slay
Than that fell dragon, who, as fables say,
Guarded by day and night, in fierce unrest,
The golden-fruited gardens of the West.

Onward they far'd, 'till ere the daylight's close,
From that worn crew Devotion's voice arose;
Around a reverent man in earnest pray'r
Gather'd they stood, with sun-burnt foreheads bare:
And oh! the solemn voice—the place—the time—
The glorious mission—and th' enchanted clime—
The thought of home, of friends, of native soil,
Far, far away—the brotherhood of toil—
Made their hearts full, and all their souls as one;
And oft as each his comrade look'd upon,
They felt the tie which they alone can feel,
Whose common peril makes a common weal;
And weather-beaten cheeks were wet with tears,
That haply ne'er had flow'd since childhood's years,
As peal'd o'er Niger's wave, ne'er heard till then,
The hopeful heart's accord—the loud “Amen.”
Never, I ween, did pray'r more solemn sound,
In gothic fane, the hallow'd walls around,—
Where white-rob'd quires discourse the tuneful scrolls,
And volum'd music from the organ rolls,—

Than from that lonely crew, in that lone hour :
And, like the spell of some benignant pow'r,
The sacred echo floated far away
Thro' sunless dells, where, shrinking from the day,
The fiends of demon-worship cower'd to hear
That still small voice proclaim their fall was near ;
Echo of hope, which, as the years flow on,
Shall swell into the full and perfect tone !
Omen of joyful sound, that seem'd to be
A pledge of love, and light, and liberty.

Their voices died, as died the ling'ring light ;
Vanish'd the sun, and o'er the earth was night ;
Night in the tropics ! Nature's choicest boon
To the scorch'd subject of the tyrant sun,
And lovely, with her starry diadems,
As a dark beauty spangled o'er with gems.
Soon as the ev'ning breeze blows calm 'around,
Thro' Afric's land the song and dance resound,
Till night becomes for them a charmèd day,
While on the sand, yet warm with noontide ray,
Or in the forest, 'neath the well-known tree,
The dusky revellers hold their jubilee.
Not as in northern clime, pale-quivering far
Thro' the cold azure glimmers each lone star ;
But the full planets seem to glow more near,
And liquid lustre rains from ev'ry sphere ;

And moonlight falls, not as in saintly aisle,
Silvering the darkness with an icy smile,
Cold as the marble knights along the walls,—
But o'er Creation, like a mantle, falls,
Mellowing the face of things with magic hue
That makes the heav'n more deeply, darkly, blue.

On such a night, 'mid fragrant grasses deep,
In Acardy, Endymion lay asleep—
Or sage Chaldee, on some lone hill and high,
Read the bright volume of the fateful sky—
On such a night, while round him slept his foes,
Bold Park awhile forgot a captive's woes—
Park, who had brav'd upon his lonely way,
The storm by night, the fiercer sun by day,
And mark'd (his only guide) by lightning's glare,
The needle pointing toward the northern star,—
Emblem of Him, whose high unconquer'd will,
Nor quail'd nor swerv'd, but pointed onward still.
Far from the thirsty waste, in homeward dream,
He'd wander to his native Yarrow's stream ;
Or wake to watch the yellow moonlight pour,
Thro' his white tent, upon the sandy floor,
And bless the sacred tranquil hour that brought
Respite from scorn, and time for soaring thought ;
And there, 'mid ruthless Moors, unfriended, lone,
With a stout heart, and Heav'n to guide him on,

He wrote his labours on the faithful page
That tells the traveller's tale from age to age ;
While the great thought of what mankind would gain
Sublim'd his toils, and sanctified the chain.—
And such a night those weary seamen blest
With its cool paradise of timely rest ;
And sweet it was the ev'ning breeze to feel,
Low-murmuring o'er their throbbing temples steal—
The breeze, that slept through all the noontide hours,
Now waking from its bed of luscious flow'rs,
And wafting, as it kiss'd the moonlit wave,
Its incense rare to ev'ry nook and cave :
And sweet to list, amid the silence there
The hum of insect-music in the air :
And sweet, the myriad fireflies' play to mark,
Gemming the shade with many-twinkling spark :
And sweet the native boatman's song to hear
Among the reeds, that told a village near ;
And, as they glide, to see before them soon
The cone-shap'd huts white-gleaming in the moon.
Then on the silence burst a sudden cry
Of savage welcome, and discordant joy,
And shone the signal-fires with ruddy glow,
On dusky crowds, that hurried to and fro,
And tom-toms beat, and hollow conch-shells blew,
As on they rush'd to see the white man's "Fire-
canoe :"

And old men vow'd was ne'er such gathering known,
Since solemn feast was held or war-pipe blown.

The native council met with dawn of light,—
Dark-visag'd senators in^b robes of white ;
Men who had learn'd the wisdom taught by years,
Courtiers of Nature, patriarchal peers :
In stature first behold their monarch wild,
A warrior-chief,—a despot,—and a child ;
Burden'd with many-colour'd vesture quaint,
And the rude pomp of cumbrous ornament.
He spoke :—his slaves conceal'd from vulgar gaze
The royal lips, and heard in mute amaze ;
His muffled voice beneath a screen of fans
Seem'd to the wond'ring savage more than man's.
Vain without art, he vaunted his renown,
Told of great village-kings, who fear'd his frown,
And deign'd the white man's glitt'ring gifts to prize,
To shew our Queen found favour in his eyes :
With reverent air the Briton heard, the while,
His childlike boast—nor heard without a smile.

And such their king ; a hamlet for a state,
A hut his palace, he is passing great ;
His fleet the long canoe ; a host to him
Some hundred half-clad warriors, lithe of limb ;

^b See account of native costume in Captain Trotter's expedition.

His are the customs of their little mart,
And his the first-fruits of their infant art ;
He reigns an emperor, for his power, in all
But cares and perils, is imperial.

A simple race he rules, that know no toil ;
The sun and show'r are tillers of their soil ;
Theirs is the lotus, bringing dreamy calm,
The shade of cotton tree, the wine of palm ;
And theirs the soul, sworn enemy to sorrow,
Joyous to-day, and careless of to-morrow ;
By Niger's banks, more rich than Egypt's Nile,
They bask in Nature's ever-beaming smile,—
Nature, who crowns from her unfailing hoard,
Th' uncostly dwelling, and the healthful board.
Not theirs the lot to guide, with reeking brow,
The steer slow-toiling at the stubborn plough ;
On mould unwrought the sowers fling the grain,
Pacing in time to some old village-strain :
Beside them flock the merry neighbours all,
And the blithe toil becomes a festival.

For them no records of the past unfold
The time-taught wisdom, and the deeds of old ;
Their only chronicler, a minstrel rude,
Sings the wild tale of many a fiery feud,
While ancient warriors, kindling as they hear,
Forget their age, and, trembling, grasp the spear.

Or oft at eve, a reverend company,
Their counsel-house the shade of some old tree,
The grey-head chiefs discuss in sage debate
The weighty trifles of their village-state.
Or, while from many a pipe of river-reed,
Curls wreathèd incense of the Indian weed,
They tell with wonder grave the legend old
Of yellow gnome that haunts the mine^c of gold
With many a fearful tale of sorcery,
And fate that lightens from the evil eye,
And white-stol'd forest-sprite, with floating hair,
Whom the benighted wanderer calls in pray'r,
And in the lonely echo seems to hear
Mysterious spirit-voices answering near.

A green old age, nor crabb'd by carking care,
The ancient dwellers of the Niger share :
Youth's flame still warms them, flickering tho' it be,
As winter's sunbeam gilds the leafless tree ;
And as they watch the moonlight revellers play,
They grow in memory's dream, as blithe as they ;
Or muse of spiritland, where, one by one,
Calm-journeying, dame and maiden, sire and son,
Shall meet in ever-during rest, and be
Where spoiler spoils not, and where slaves are free.

^c Discovery and Adventures in Africa. By H. Murray,
Professor Jamieson, &c., &c.

Shall then the sons of Ham for ever have
No peace but death—no freedom but the grave?
What tho' th' ancestral curse upon his race
'Neath torrid suns decreed their dwelling-place?
What tho' his brethren of the north outvie
The tropic man in deeds of mastery?
Kind Nature, than his brother-man more kind,
Gave him the enduring frame, the simple mind,
The love of home, whose heart-awakening glow
Endears the tropic waste, the northern snow;
He lov'd the burning sun that saw his birth,
He lov'd his lowly patriarchal hearth;
Why tear him from his sunny home, to toil
'Neath skies unblest, upon a sterner soil?
Gaze, if a tyrant's eye to gaze can dare,
Upon that living image of despair:
The childlike smoothness of that ebon brow
Behold! it never knew a care till now.
What speaking stone, what painted woe, could trace
The simple sorrows of that passive face,
When struggling thro' despair's dull apathy,
Rolls the big tear-drop from his vacant eye,
As oft in speechless trance he sees once more
His father's hearth, and treads his native shore?
And as his brethren hail him free from harm
The fetter clanks upon his outstretch'd arm,
Breaks the sweet dream of misery's brief repose,
And wakes the captive to a life of woes!

Yet his are virtues which no rule imparts,
The generous growth of wild untutor'd hearts.
Bear witness, Park, who heard'st with tearful eye
The negro maiden's song of sympathy ;
And witness ye—but, ha ! your voice is dumb—
There rise no praises from th' adventurer's tomb.

By Niger's bank they rest, who in the pride
And strength of self-devotion, conqu'ring, died.
Children of peril—nurslings of the seas—
Steel'd to all harm, but Afric's dire disease.
Withering, resistless, as the simoom's blast,
Thro' the wrung frame the subtle fever past—
And left a spectre, hollow-ey'd and wan,
A nerveless, mindless, ruin of a man.
Pitying and wond'ring with a tearful awe,
Himself unscath'd, the gentle Negro saw
Palsied the mind that he had lov'd to obey—
The strength in which he trusted, waste away.
And oft he haunts where dropp'd the farewell tear
From grateful eyes upon the white man's bier.
O'er that lone grave no sculptur'd mourners weep
Where evermore those high adventurers sleep—
Art's ill-beseeming splendours mark it not,—
But Nature's beauty consecrates the spot,
Cluster'd with bright-ey'd flow'rets breathing balm,
Fring'd with rare grasses, canopied with palm ;

And gentle hearts are mindful of the brave
Who came—who died, their suff'ring race to save.

Fir'd by the visions of a future day,
Hope shall advance, where martyrs led the way ;
'Till men shall cry, on Afric's burning plain,
“ Park hath not died, nor Lander toil'd in vain ! ”—
There is a majesty by Niger's flood,—
A rapture in the wild primeval wood,—
Glorious th' all-present blaze of Afric's noon,
And sweet the charmèd light of tropic moon ;
And earth is bounteous, Nature heav'nly fair,—
But ah ! the mind of man is darken'd there !
More proudly then the Niger's stream shall flow,
When man shall learn Heav'n's kind intent to know ;
And not less wildly grand shall Nature be,
When in his land the Negro dwelleth free,—
And lovelier shall the charmèd moonlight shine
On peaceful village, and on Christian shrine.

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11.
N I N E V E H.

A PRIZE POEM

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JULY III. M DCCC LI.

BY

ALFRED WILLIAM HUNT. 1830-1836

SCHOLAR OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE.



OXFORD:

FRANCIS MACPHERSON.

M DCCC LI.



NINEVEH.

IT is the hour, when thousand gorgeous hues
Rose-flushed and golden all the west suf-
fuse ;

It is the hour, when o'er the desert air
Peals the soft chant which calls to evening prayer ;
Chiming from every far-off minaret
Like spirit-voices when the sun hath set.
Far on the level waste, encircled round
By day's last splendours—one mysterious mound,
One long, low range, with solitary cone,
Breaks with dark edge, that amber-gleaming zone.
'Tis but a shapeless mass, yet something there
Tells a wild tale of ruin and despair.
'Tis fringed with flowers, and yet the hues of death,
Peep through the tresses of its vernal wreath.
Those deep dusk lines—those characters of flame—
Scarring its slope, no vulgar earth proclaim.

And mark'st thou not in every torrent-bed,
Like slags from furnace-fires, confusedly spread
Strange molten heaps—in every rain-worn seam
Fragments of graven alabaster gleam—
And shards and tiles with gayer colours shine,
Than the freaked flowers that round them clasping
twine?

Or canst thou read, where yonder grasses play
Those arrow-angled words thick-wrought on baken
clay?

And do no memories in that wild waste dwell,
Hath Fancy never with her witching spell
Hallowed the spot? the Arab lingering near
At fall of eve, feels he no secret fear,
Spite of himself, upon his spirit press,
In the hushed desert's glimmering loneliness?
What time the muffled roar of Tigris' wave,
Marks where a thousand murmuring currents rave
O'er weir foam-white (athwart the channel flung
By giant hands while yet this world was young);
There oft in moonlight-haze, the Moslem sees
Unearthly forms and æry palaces
Rise 'mid the charmed waste, and phantoms glide
On spectral causeway, o'er the silvery tide.
And oft, when winds in fitful cadence moan
And pale stars whirl around yon gloomy cone,

The nomad hears imprisoned spirits' wail
Inform the sighings of the midnight gale ;
And thinks of demon powers by Allah's doom
For ever pent within that caverned tomb.
Or when Orion flames along the sky,
'Tis Nimrod's restless shade, careering high
O'er the weird realms his earthly sceptre swayed
In star-embroidered robe and glittering belt arrayed.
And wild fantastic tales of earth's first prime
Of patriarch virtue and Titanic crime
Told by the embers' glow of reddening light
Beguile the starlit watches of the night—
But aught beyond tradition's oral tale
Or gleams of truth, like wavering sunlights pale,
The Arab knows not, though around him rise
The sepulchres of earth's first monarchies ;
Nor ever dreams, his camel's tinkling tread
Falls on some silent City of the Dead !
For know—that circle o'er whose desert ring
Those shapeless mounds their darkening shadows fling,
That desolation—far as eye can see
Forlorn and lifeless—once was NINEVEH.

Dread shades of Ninus and Semiramis
Were these your realms—your empire city this ?
And thou, the Assyrian's glory ! peerless queen
Of yet unrifled worlds ! was this the scene

Of all thy marvels ! these dull mounds thy throne
That sullen flood, thy silver-clasping zone.

There the lone heron rears her dusky crest,
'Mid sighing reeds the bittern builds her nest,
And wild beasts slake their thirst, when noontide's
glow

In swimming haze enfolds that waste of woe.
Oh, fearful witness of a doom divine,
For earth once knew no splendours bright as thine !

The spirit of eld is on me, as I stand
On Zagros' brow, three thousand years expand
Their mythic glories, and the days appear
When all was life—all joy—all beauty here.

Oh gorgeous vision ! when this sunlit plain
Rippled in golden seas of ripening grain :
When the far-ranging eye enraptured, traced
One citied wilderness, one peopled waste :
One maze of spire, and pinnacle and shrine
Sparkling along the dimmed horizon's line.
Temples were there, on piled-up mountains raised,
Whose eaves with gold, whose walls with vermeil
blazed :

With aisles on aisles in lustrous long array,
And opal domes that flashed a blinding ray :
There fringed palms for ever waved a shade
O'er gay-decked roof and chequered colonnade.

There sheeny fountains danced, there hung on high
The terraced garden's leafy tracery :
And many a dreamy paradise between
Peeped 'mid the glare, calm isles of dewy green.
Around, in range illimitable shone,
Vast walls and battlements, nor yet of stone,
Bastions and pyramids of clay, which gleamed
Like rocks of jasper, when the sunblaze streamed
O'er their far summits, glittering broad and high
Line above line, against a sapphire sky.

And flowing round two sides, a lordly tide
Reflected silken-sailed flotillas' pride.
And quays beheld with richest hand unrolled
The wealth of Ind, and Ophir's ruddy gold.
Earth's tribute-offerings, over land and sea,
Bright Queen of Cities, found their way to thee !
For thee the " Desert-ship " high-laden came
Through moving sands, and reddening spires of flame,
Bearing rare gems, and pearls and corals gay
And bales of rustling silks from far Cathay,
To deck thy crimson-clothed bazaars, and feed
Wealth's pampered pride and languid luxury's need.

'Twas then God looked from heaven—in all thy
round

Not one pure soul—one righteous man was found.
But while the' avenging angel lingering still

Paused on the wing, and waited but His will—
Ere hell had opened yet her flaming tomb,
A voice was sent to warn thee of thy doom.

The sun was keeping still his eastern state
When Israël's prophet passed thine outer gate.
All day through myriad-haunted paths he trod
The voice of fate—the messenger of God.
Yet forty days! resounds the startling cry—
Yet forty days! and Nineveh shall lie
A desolation!—forty days are given
To meet the judgment of offended heaven!
At once those myriads felt the freezing thrill—
The thronged bazaar, the joyous dance is still.
So wildly—fearfully—those accents rung—
God's spirit speaking from a human tongue.
Onward—still on—till those drear echoes fall
In golden court and sapphire-vaulted hall;
Where amid swarthy warriors' flashing ring
And white-stoled Magians, sate the Assyrian king
Monarch of millions! see before him stand
That pilgrim-prophet, and with outstretched hand,
Proclaim his doom—

The king hath laid aside
His regal robe and diadem of pride:
Earth's mightiest lord in sordid ashes lay,
And with him Nineveh: and all that day

Swelled up to heaven a city's anguished cry ;
Incense of sorrow, gladdening all the sky—
The Almighty heard that many-voicèd prayer,
From morn till even fill the murmurous air,
And checked His lightnings.

But alas, too soon
Returning sin annulled the precious boon—
In vain destruction's stretched-out arm was stayed :
Thine hour of judgment might not be delayed.

As oft, when stormy-lingering sunsets throw
Deep-mirrored gleams o'er ocean-waves below,
Empurpled cloud and burnished sea and sky
Prolong those lurid glories ere they die ;
So lost in mythic tale and centuries' gloom
The last, dire moment which fulfilled thy doom.

Say did'st thou perish then, when round thee poured
Chaldæa's swarms and Media's rebel horde ?
When roused from silken-veiled seraglios,
And life-long dream of luxury's lulled repose,
The last of Nimrod's line, beheld afar
The horizon black with tempest-gathering war.
Fear not, he cried, till yonder rippling river
These brazen gates and bastioned cliffs shall sever !
Fear not, to-night in our ancestral hall
Princes, we keep joy's maddest festival !

Woe worth that night, for heaven their fate had
sealed,

The swollen Tigris foams—the ramparts yield :
The banquet hall is now their battle-field.
All—all is lost—and will that monarch die
E'en as he lived and reigned—ingloriously !

Where yon vast terrace looms in misty air
A pyre is rising, gorgeous rich and rare :
Flashing afar along the nightly sky
With argent, gold, and jewelled marquetry :
And many a Tyrian vesture's purple wreath,
Fit for a sultan's flaming couch of death.
Saw ye the glow that crimsoned o'er the skies ?
Wealth, life, and empire swelled that awful sacrifice !

Or didst thou rise from ashes, once again
To sway the sceptre over Asia's plain ?
Did victory lead thy myriads as of yore
And captive princes throng thy courts once more ?
But the day came, when withering o'er thee past
Once and for ever ruin's Siroc blast—
That day foretold in strains of wildest fire
From the rapt Elkesite's prophetic lyre—
When tower and temple crushing blazing fell,
When pomp, pride, splendour, sank in deepest hell :
Earth shook—all nations shuddered—the wide air

Moaned with the floating echoes of despair.

And then, O dreary blank—thy glory's theme
Sounded, to later worlds, a glittering dream.
And these were all that time had not effaced,
Stern, gloomy mounds that broke a gloomier waste.

Here the ten thousand, as they hasten by,
Gaze long and thoughtfully, with wondering eye :
They talk of perished cities—and anon
Passes a youthful conqueror, speeding on
To grasp the gorgeous Orient's dazzling crown ;
And hosts are thronging 'neath their lonely frown ;
Here bannered armies met, nor thought their blood
Crimsoned the sands where once a city stood.
The tides of time swept past, and voiceless still
Rose from the sunburnt moor each scorched hill,
And knew no change upon its hoary crest,
Save when with flowery coronal 'twas drest,
Or swept by winter's rains—the world grew old,
And still that city slept, unsought, unknown, untold.

At last, 'twas thus the Moslem version ran,
A bright-eyed stranger came from Frangistan :
Master of mightiest spells—and vaster far
Than wizard aisles of pillared Chilminar
Cities arose—enchanted halls revealed
Treasures untold by primal kings concealed :

It is no dream, though such as dreams alone
Could ever paint—but all is very stone
Calm all and grey.—Before the entranced eyes
The world's primeval palaces arise.
What charm hath lulled that city! what long spell
Of sleeping centuries o'er its glories fell!
What sudden day unbinds the viewless chain,
And bids life's stream rush through each marble vein!
Lo! where yon fleeting sunbeam faintly steals
What thronging shapes its alien light reveals!
What fearful forms, in twilight horror rise
Stamp with cleft hoof, and lour with baleful eyes!
See, the pale marble, broadly-shadowed, rife
With wild, colossal, mockeries of life!
'Tis but the sport of time hath flashed the light
Of our world's noonday on millennial night:
And bids us here the dim memorials scan
Of ages past ere history's world began.

Here now, when evening shades the storied wall
What millions, Fancy, waken at thy call!
What æry forms at thine enchantress wand
Throng the grey porch and gleaming worlds beyond.
See now, in fear enthroned, Assyria's lord
As king revered—as Deity adored.
See the long pageant, serpent-like unfold
Its coils of crimson, amethyst, and gold,

Winding through aisles with rainbow-hues inlaid
Yet dimmed with demon-gods' tremendous shade :
While thousand cresset-lamps, with phosphor-glow
Pour silver floods o'er polished walls below,
Where bathed in light, emblazoned warriors rear
The flame-like sword—the lightning of the spear :
There sculptured battle glows, there cities fall,
And chariots thunder round the frescoed hall :
Here moves an imaged king, tiara-crowned
With long, fringed vesture sweeping to the ground,
With waving tressèd hair, and star-gemmed zone,
And rich embroidery o'er his shoulders thrown :
Heaven's constant majesty, with plume outspread
In mystic ring floats hovering o'er his head.
There in the angle, with its pearl-dropt leaves,
The sacred tree its fretted foliage weaves :
On either side, a broad-winged figure brings
In woven basket, hallowed offerings,
Fir-cones and flowers—two eagle-headed shapes
Grisly and grim. But where the portal gapes
Approach and tremble—there on either hand
Mysterious signs, unwearied warders stand,
Huge lion-forms, frowning a tawny red,
With regal height majestic—human head,
And eagle-wings thrown back, of every hue
Vermilion-feathered, gold and jet and blue,

Tinging the pavement. Tremble, thou art nigh,
Symbols unchanged of changeless Deity!

Oh! that those stern and hueless lips could tell
What nations once have owned the shuddering spell!
What God-loved seers, what world-wide conquerors
here

Have gazed in horror, or bowed down in fear!
Where now those nations? though the sunbeam shines
Once more through palace courts or temple shrines,
Where once in sacred calm, or restless strife,
Throbb'd the full pulses of their mighty life.
They rise not now! those senseless gods alone
Survive, to frown in everlasting stone.

Relics of awful memory! since your day
Time's whirling wheels might almost own decay!
Thrice since hath conquest's crimson wing unfurled
Far-spreading shadows o'er a subject world.
Still—still ye lour unchanged! and now save one
The prophet-roll of empire hath been done.
And a dread oath is sworn that never more
Shall earth's wide realms one earthly lord adore:
And shall ye live, till that millennial day
When earth, with heaven, shall own, one heavenly
sway?

O thought of terror, when that lofty theme
Shall be no more a prophet's rapturous dream:

When high-enthroned in empyrèan blaze,
Shall sit the Ancient of eternal days.
With glory-streaming hair, and robe of snow
Car-borne on fiery wheels' seraphic glow :
And judgment lingers not, the thrones are set—
The Book is opened—age with age is met.
He comes, to whom the Eternal God hath given
All power on earth, all majesty in heaven :
The heir of time and heaven's undying state,
The SON OF MAN to close that book of Fate.

THE END.

12.
THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.

A PRIZE POEM

RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE XXIII. M DCCC LII.

BY

(Si) EDWIN ARNOLD. (1832-1904)

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.



OXFORD:

FRANCIS MACPHERSON.

M DCCC LII.

SYNOPSIS.

“ Belshazzar’s impious feast; a handwriting, unknown to the magicians, troubleth the king. At the commendation of the queen Daniel is brought; He, reproving the king of pride and idolatry, readeth and interpreteth the writing. The monarchy is translated to the Medes.”—*Daniel*, ch. 5.



THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.

*ἀλλ' ἴσθι τοι τὰ σκληρὰ ἄγαν φρονήματα
πίπτειν μάλιστα.*



NOT by one portal, or one path alone
God's holy messages to men are known ;
Waiting the glances of his awful eyes
Silver-winged Seraphs do him embassies ;
And stars interpreting his high behest
Guide the lone feet and glad the failing breast—
The rolling thunder and the raging sea
Speak the stern purpose of the Deity,
And storms beneath and rainbow hues above
Herald his anger or proclaim his love :
The still small voices of the summer day,
The red Sirocco, and the breath of May,
The lingering harmony in Ocean shells,
The fairy music of the meadow bells,

Earth and void Air—Water and wasting Flame
Have words to whisper, tongues to tell his name.
Once—with no cloak of careful mystery
Himself was herald of his own decree ;
The hand that edicts on the marble drew
Graved the stern sentence of their scorner too.—
Listen and learn ! Tyrants have heard the tale,
And turned from hearing terror-struck and pale,
Spiritless captives sinking with the chain
Have read this page and taken heart again.—

From sunlight unto starlight trumpets told
Her king's command in Babylon the old,
From sunlight unto starlight west and east
A thousand satraps girt them for the feast,
And reined their chargers to the palace hall
Where King Belshazzar held high festival :
A pleasant palace under pleasant skies
With cloistered courts and gilded galleries,
And gay kiosk and painted balustrade
For winter terraces and summer shade ;
By court and terrace, minaret and dome,
Euphrates, rushing from his mountain home,
Rested his rage, and curbed his crested pride

To belt that palace with his bluest tide ;
Broad-fronted bulls with chiselled feathers barred
In silent vigil keeping watch and ward,
Giants of granite wrought by cunning hand
Guard in the gate and frown upon the land :
Not summer's glow nor yellow autumn's glare
Pierced the broad tamarisks that blossomed there ;
The moonbeam darting through their leafy screen
Lost half its silver in the softened green,
And fell with lessened lustre, broken light,
Tracing quaint arabesque of dark and white ;
Or dimly tinting on the graven stones
The pictured annals of Chaldæan thrones.—
There, from the rising to the setting day
Birds of bright feather sang the light away,
And fountain waters on the palace-floor
Made even answer to the river's roar,
Rising in silver from the crystal well
And breaking into spangles as they fell ;
Though now ye heard them not—for far along
Rang the broad chorus of the banquet song,
And sounds as gentle, echoes soft as these
Died out of hearing from the revelries.

High on a throne of ivory and gold,
From crown to footstool clad in purple fold,
Lord of the east from sea to distant sea
The king Belshazzar feasteth royally—
And not that dreamer in the desert cave
Peopled his paradise with pomp as brave:
Vessels of silver, cups of crusted gold
Blush with a brighter red than all they hold;
Pendulous lamps like planets of the night
Flung on the diadems a fragrant light,
Or slowly swinging in the midnight sky
Gilded the ripples as they glided by :—
And sweet and sweeter rang the cittern-string
Soft as the beating of a Seraph's wing,
And swift and swifter in the measured dance
The tresses gather and the sandals glance,
And bright and brighter at the festal board
The flagons bubble and the wines are poured;
No lack of goodly company was there,
No lack of laughing eyes to light the cheer;
From Dara trooped they, from Daremma's grove
"The suns of battle and the moons of love;"*
From where Arsissa's silver waters sleep

* Hafiz, the Persian Anacreon.

To Imla's marshes and the inland deep,
From pleasant Calah and from Sittacene
The horseman's captain and the Harem's queen.—

It seemed no summer-cloud of passing woe
Could fling its shadow on so fair a show—
It seemed the gallant forms that feasted there
Were all too grand for woe, too great for care—
Whence came the anxious eye, the altered tone,
The dull presentiment no heart would own,
That ever changed the smiling to a sigh
Sudden as sea-bird flashing from the sky : —
It is not that they know the spoiler waits
Harnessed for battle at the brazen gates,
It is not that they hear the watchman's call
Mark the slow minutes on the leaguered wall,
The clash of quivers and the ring of spears
Make pleasant music in a soldier's ears :
And not a scabbard hideth sword to-night
That hath not glimmered in the front of fight—
May not the blood in every beating vein
Have quick foreknowledge of the coming pain ?
Even as the prisoned silver,* dead and dumb

* The quicksilver in the tube of the thermometer.

Shrinks at cold Winter's footfall ere he come.—

The king hath felt it and the heart's unrest
Heaved the broad purple of his belted breast ;
Sudden he speaks—" What ! doth the beaded juice
" Savour like hyssop that ye scorn its use ?
" Wear ye so pitiful and sad a soul
" That tramp of foemen scares ye from the bowl ?
" Think ye the gods on yonder starry floor
" Tremble for terror, when the thunders roar ?
" Are we not gods ? have we not fought with God ?
" And shall we shiver at a robber's nod ?
" No—let them batter till the brazen bars
" Ring merry mocking of their idle wars—
" Their fall is fated for to-morrow's sun,
" The lion rouses when his feast is done—
" Crown me a cup—and fill the bowls we brought
" From Judah's temple when the fight was fought—
" Drink, till the merry madness fill the soul
" To Salem's conqueror in Salem's bowl—
" Each from the goblet of a God shall sip
" And Judah's gold tread heavy on the lip." *

* " He never drinks

But Timon's silver treads upon his lip." Shak. *Tit. Andr.*

The last loud answer dies along the line,
The last light bubble bursts upon the wine,
His eager lips are on the jewelled brink,
Hath the cup poison that he doubts to drink ?
Is there a spell upon the sparkling gold,
That so his fevered fingers quit their hold ?
Whom sees he where he gazes ? what is there
Freezing his vision into fearful stare ?
Follow his lifted arm and lighted eye
And watch with them the wondrous mystery.—

There cometh forth a hand—upon the stone,
Graving the symbols of a speech unknown ;
Fingers like mortal fingers—leaving there
The blank wall flashing characters of fear—
And still it glideth silently and slow,
And still beneath the spectral letters grow—
Now the scroll endeth—now the seal is set—
The hand is gone—the record tarries yet.—

As one who waits the warrant of his death,
With pale lips parted and with bridled breath—
They watch the sign and dare not turn to seek

Their fear reflected in their fellows' cheek—
But stand as statues where the life is none,
Half the jest uttered—half the laughter done—
Half the flask empty—half the flagon poured,—
Each where the phantom found him at the board
Struck into silence—as December's arm
Curbs the quick ripples into crystal calm.—

With wand of ebony and sable stole
Chaldæa's wisest scan the spectral scroll—
Strong in the lessons of a lying art
Each comes to gaze, but gazes to depart—
And still for mystic sign and muttered spell
The graven letters guard their secret well—
Gleam they for warning—glare they to condemn—
God speaketh,—but he speaketh not for them.—

Oh! ever, when the happy laugh is dumb
All the joy gone, and all the anguish come—
When strong adversity and subtle pain
Wring the sad soul and rack the throbbing brain—
When friends once faithful, hearts once all our own
Leave us to weep, to bleed and die alone—
When fears and cares the lonely thought employ,

And clouds of sorrow hide the sun of joy—
When weary life, breathing reluctant breath
Hath no hope sweeter than the hope of death—
Then the best counsel and the last relief
To cheer the spirit or to cheat the grief,
The only calm, the only comfort heard
Comes in the music of a woman's word—
Like beacon-bell on some wild island-shore,
Silverly ringing in the tempest's roar,
Whose sound borne shipward through the midnight
 gloom
Tells of the path, and turns her from her doom.

So in the silence of that awful hour
When baffled magic mourned its parted power—
When kings were pale and satraps shook for fear,
A woman speaketh—and the wisest hear—
She—the high daughter of a thousand thrones
Telling with trembling lip and timid tones
Of him the Captive, in the feast forgot,
Who readeth visions—him, whose wondrous lot
Sends him to lighten doubt and lessen gloom,
And gaze undazzled on the days to come—
Daniel the Hebrew, such his name and race,

Held by a monarch highest in his grace,
He may declare—Oh!—bid them quickly send,
So may the mystery have happy end!—

Calmly and silent as the fair full moon
Comes sailing upward in the sky of June—
Fearfully as the troubled clouds of night
Shrink from before the coming of its light—
So through the hall the Prophet passed along,
So from before him fell the festal throng—
By broken wassail-cup, and wine o'erthrown
Pressed he still onward for the monarch's throne—
His spirit failed him not—his quiet eye
Lost not its light for earthly majesty ;
His lip was steady and his accent clear,
“ The king hath needed me,—and I am here.”—

“ Art thou the Prophet? read me yonder scroll
“ Whose undeciphered horror daunts my soul—
“ There shall be guerdon for the grateful task,
“ Fitted for me to give, for thee to ask—
“ A chain to deck thee—and a robe to grace,
“ Thine the third throne and thou the third in place.”

He heard—and turned him where the lighted wall
Dimmed the red torches of the festival,
Gazed on the sign with steady gaze and set,
And he who quailed not at a kingly threat
Bent the true knee and bowed the silver hair,
For that he knew the King of kings was there—
Then nerved his soul the sentence to unfold,
While his tongue trembled at the tale it told—
And never tongue shall echo tale as strange
Till that change cometh which must never change.

“ Keep for thyself the guerdon and the gold—
“ What God hath graved, God’s prophet must unfold ;
“ Could not thy father’s crime, thy father’s fate
“ Teach thee the terror thou hast learnt too late—
“ Hast thou not read the lesson of his life,
“ Who wars with God shall strive a losing strife ?
“ His was a kingdom mighty as thine own,
“ The sword his sceptre and the earth his throne—
“ The nations trembled when his awful eye
“ Gave to them leave to live or doom to die—
“ The Lord of Life—the Keeper of the grave,
“ His frown could wither and his smile could save—
“ Yet when his heart was hard, his spirit high

“ God drave him from his kingly majesty,
“ Far from the brotherhood of fellow men
“ To seek for dwelling in the desert den ;
“ Where the wild asses feed and oxen roam
“ He sought his pasture and he made his home,
“ And bitter-biting frost and dews of night
“ Schooled him in sorrow till he knew the right,
“ That God is ruler of the rulers still
“ And setteth up the sovereign that he will :—
“ Oh ! hadst thou treasured in repentant breast
“ His pride and fall, his penitence and rest,
“ And bowed submissive to Jehovah’s will,
“ Then had thy sceptre been a sceptre still—
“ But thou hast mocked the majesty of heaven,
“ And shamed the vessels to its service given,
“ And thou hast fashioned idols of thine own
“ Idols of gold, of silver, and of stone ;
“ To them hast bowed the knee, and breathed the breath,
“ And they must help thee in the hour of death.
“ Woe for the sign unseen, the sin forgot,
“ God was among ye, and ye knew it not !
“ Hear what he sayeth now, ‘ Thy race is run,
“ The years are numbered and the days are done,
“ Thy soul hath mounted in the scale of fate,

“ The Lord hath weighed thee and thou lackest weight;
“ Now in thy palace porch the spoilers stand,
“ To seize thy sceptre, to divide thy land.’ ”—

He ended—and his passing foot was heard,
But none made answer, not a lip was stirred—
Mute the free tongue and bent the fearless brow,—
The mystic letters had their meaning now!
Soon came there other sound—the clash of steel,
The heavy ringing of the iron heel—
The curse in dying, and the cry for life,
The bloody voices of the battle strife.—

That night they slew him on his father’s throne,
The deed unnoticed and the hand unknown;
Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay,
A robe of purple, round a form of clay.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

A PRIZE POEM,

1853.

THE RUINS OF EGYPTIAN THEBES.

A PRIZE POEM,
RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,
JUNE 7th, 1853.

BY

SAMUEL HARVEY REYNOLDS,

SCHOLAR OF EXETER COLLEGE.



OXFORD,
T. AND G. SHRIMPTON.

M DCCC LIII.



THE RUINS OF EGYPTIAN THEBES.

Βέβακεν ὕψις, οὐ μεθύστερον
Πτεροῖς ὀπασδοῖς ὕπνου κελεύθοις.

I LAY in slumber, lightly bound, yet free
By fancy winged I strayed unfettered on
Through fairy splendours, touched again with life,
And orbiting into act and circumstance,
From the dim past ; awhile methought I stood
Among the halls of Carthage ; now among
The statued shrines of Athens, with the gods
Pallas, and young Apollo ; now at Rome
I saw a senate giving world-wide law
Or Scipio hurling back upon the foe
The storm of war at Zama ; 'till at length
Slowly my vision gathered time and shape.
And then upon a waste of Libyan plain
I wandered on alone, and not a sight,

Or sound I heard of any living thing,
Save when the ostrich, borne across the sand
On storm-swift pinion, lessened to a speck
Far in the faint horizon ; or alone
The dusky eagle winged his trackless way
High overhead ; but when the night was late
The distant echo of the lion's roar
Fell on the ear like thunder, heard afar,
What time the storm breaks crashing on the hills,
And thickest hail, and streams of angry fire
Reveal the terrors of the gloomy night.
And now the sun sank slowly to repose
In the still west, and 'neath his latest beam
The flashing torrent of the dark-blue Nile
Poured on its mass of waters, seaward borne ;
Now o'er the headlong cataract with a roar
Down plunging, lost in clouds of glittering spray,
That lightly fell, like lilies scattered down
From ivory fingers, or the silvery shower
When the rude North's unkindly touch shakes off
The glistening dew-drop from the rose's bloom ;
Or parted here by barrier rocks, that frowned,
Like giants set in the path to stop their way,

With thousand slender streamlets girdled in
 A thousand mossy isles ; here broadening down
 In full deep flood through tall acacia bowers,
 And happy orchards set with golden fruits
 Fair as the treasure, dragon-watched, that shone
 In the far gardens of th' Hesperides.
 But distant seen in solitary state
 Rose frowning towers, and battlements that fenced
 A mighty city ; and as near I came
 Precipitous walls, and clustered palaces,
 And temples old in story, bathed in light,
 Shone to the eye, like those rich jewelled domes
 That genii build in old Arabian tale
 Rich with the treasures of the land and sea.
 The gates lay broken down, I entered in
 Unheeded ; all was silence, save the cry
 Of some ill-omened bird, scared from his haunt
 By man's unwonted step ; and all the town
 Lay bound in slumber ; through the long blank street
 No face met mine, alone I wandered on.
 But all about me, towering to the sky,
 Rose lofty pinnacles, and ancient halls
 Of monarchs, all forgotten ; only these

Remained to tell their glory, only these
 To mock the wonder of a later age.
 And through tall windows rich with coloured stones
 The sunbeam poured upon the dazzled floors ;
 And flooded light o'er columns wreathed about
 With lotus, and high pointed obelisks traced
 With mystic letters, hard to tell, as leaves
 From sybil's scroll, or those dread lines of fire
 That wrought confusion in Belshazzar's hall,
 Writ by an unknown hand, foreshadowing woe.
 And every chamber, every palace hall
 Was dight with sculptured legendary lore ;
 Or brightly glowing by the painter's art
 Told stories of an early world, the youth
 Of nations that had passed away, and left,
 Save these, no other memory of their state.
 And here the sunbeam lighted into life
 An ancient tale of war ; a bannered host
 Poured forth from every gate, and all the plain
 Gleamed with bright brass, and tossed a thousand
 fires
 From helm and shield, and from ten thousand throats
 In wild fierce discord rose the yell of war :

And there the prancings of the warrior steed,
The din of shielded legions, and the clang
Of measured martial tread, each sound that wakes
The daring latent in the soldier's breast :
The eagle too, that knew the gathering strife
The gaunt grim vulture hovered there, and troops
Of hungry birds, that tear their sweetest meal
What time the ranks are broken, and the fight
Slopes onward, or the thick black cloud of smoke
Wreathes up in volumes from the conquered town.
Nor war alone, but every motley scene
Of life was pictured there, in light and shade,
Or glad, or mournful, like an April morn
Half dulled with clouds, half laughing on the sun.
And here a long procession filled the streets,
A prince's wedding gay with royal robes
And torches, moving lightly to the sound
Of festal music ; here the crowded board
Was thronged with guests that feasted till the eve,
And sported till the morning star looked down
On twilight slowly broadening into day.
And other sights were there : the Libyan gods
Stood, each in marble, figured to the life

By artist's fancy, such as life might be
If life itself were frozen into stone.
And there were Isis, Horus, and the rest,
The dog Anubis, and the wolf-god, he
Who slew Osiris, Typhon; and the bull
Apis, to whom a myriad voices rise
And hail Osiris rendered back to life.
Nor these alone, but men whose deeds of fame
Speak to us from the past, sage, warrior, king,
Poet, and statesman, names whose charm hath power
To bind the ages with a closer chain
Of brotherhood in great and glorious deeds.
But I passed on, and left the glittering halls,
And stood within the sepulchres of kings,
More wondrous than their earthly palaces.
For there they dwelt a little span of life
Brief as a dream that fades away at morn,
And passed and mingled with the silent dead :
But here, while countless ages came and went,
They lay in awful majesty, unchanged,
Nor fearing change; till the revolving years,
Completed, circled out a newer life;
And former scenes, forgotten to the sense,

Were acted o'er again ; for so they deemed,
 What was, had been, and was again to be
 In due succession, different, yet the same.
 And here within an inner chamber, dim,
 Hung all with solemn draperies, where the sun
 Had never pierced, and breezes never blew
 The fragrant morning, sad as a sick man's room,
 Whose friends stand hushed expecting ere he die,
 A lonely woman sat ; a single lamp
 Burned on before her, like a little star
 Scarce seen through drifting clouds when all the
 night

Is black with tempest ; and its light was dim,
 Cold, cheerless, as in Iceland's winter falls
 One straggling sunbeam o'er a waste of snow.
 Her face was beautiful, but pale and sad
 With untold grief ; her long dark careless hair
 Had slipped its band, and strayed in tangled folds
 Down her cold bosom ; and her eye was dim :
 But heaved her breast as though a Hecla fire
 Were cratered there, and forced its way unbid
 In sudden storms of sighs ; most beautiful,
 Most sad, she sat ; but oh if Sorrow stole

A charm awhile from Beauty, Beauty's self
 Might envy well the charm that Sorrow lent
 To every perfect feature : there awhile
 I stood in silence, loth too soon to wake
 Her reverie ; at the last she spoke, her voice
 Sank deep and mournful on my listening ear
 As moans the sad sea wind the long night through
 About the desert unfrequented shore.
 " And who art thou," she said, " whose careless step
 Hath thus disturbed us in our place of rest,
 Our long last home, where ages flow untold
 In sad succession, like a funeral train
 That knows no end ; and never breaks the morn,
 But morn and eve are lost in ceaseless night."
 Then I in wonder, " Not with curious eye
 Led on by idle fancy have I come,
 But wandering in amazement, from among
 The lordly mansions of an early time,
 When dwelt the gods on earth, and raised them up
 Eternal houses, splendid as the crest
 Of white Olympus when his topmost snows
 Reflect the thunderer's presence, and the state
 Of heaven descends, to awe the eyes of men."

"Poor relics these," she said, "but I have seen
 The hundred-gated Thebæ, when in youth
 She sat aloft in queenly state, as sits
 The cloud-capped rock above a waste of sea.
 A wondrous city ; and a wondrous land,
 Such as no eye can ere again behold :
 A land of morning, where the early sun,
 Hailed with full-throated voice of welcome, rose
 In cloudless splendour far beyond the hills
 That bound thy utmost gaze : and all around
 Th' empurpled mist pierced through with golden
 light

Fled at his coming, and he reigned alone
 Through the wide sky, sole monarch of the day.
 A land of evening, where the full-orbed moon
 And all the stars that gem the coronal '
 Of dewy Night, shone o'er us, with a song
 Of voiceless music ; and the balmy air
 Slow breathing wafted on the full perfume
 From groves of citron by the banks of Nile :
 And through a thousand kingly palaces
 The calm light slumbered on the pictured walls :
 The while the shadows of our city towers

Sloped, deepening down, across the yellow sands.
But, for no language can avail to speak
The early glories of the Theban town,
The toil of works, the temples, palaces
That rose to heaven ; and more than all the rest
The earnest life that throbbed in every pulse,
And prompted on to words and deeds of fame,
That live in story in the mouths of men,
I will recall a vision from the past,
And shew thee wonders, more than tongue can tell.”
I turned me at her bidding, and beheld
A countless people, toiling on till eve,
All with a single purpose piling up
Huge granite rocks, and moulding into form
With curious art the uncouth mass of stone ;
And while they laboured, rose, as in a dream,
Deep-bastioned walls, and turrets high to heaven,
And spacious courts, and palaces, and shrines
Of jewelled fretwork, deep inlaid with gold :
And one was there who urged them on to toil,
And sang the glories of the coming age,
And Thebes, the queen of nations ; and I knew
The guardian goddess of the town, and knew

The strange sad lady whom I erst had found
 In lonely sorrow, weeping in the tombs.
 Once more I gazed : Tithonus' royal son
 Rode forth : to battle with the warrior Greeks
 That fought at Ilium ; twenty thousand knights
 And thousand chariots thronged the changing plain.
 'Twas early morning, and the glowing East
 Flushed with the purple sunrise, as the car
 Of bright Aurora shone upon the day,
 Led by the rosy Hours : about his head
 The bickering sunbeam floated, kindling up
 A thousand rainbow hues, red, emerald, gold,
 And violet. As in some deep-shaded bower
 The twining jasmine, tangled with the rose,
 Iris and honeysuckle, cheats the eye
 With warm soft hues, half manifold, half one.
 So beamed, innoxious, round his crested head,
 The wild bright glory of the lambent flame,
 Aurora's greeting to her warrior child.
 But now the scene was changed ; through every
 gate,
 In strange dark garb, poured in the victor band
 From Susa's palace, and the Median bank



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